



JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

Year 72 No. 268 July 2021

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Tom Hicks – Western Australia

Bill Wake – U.K



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WA-Nick Bertram

UK- Keith Wilkinson

QLD, TAS, NT, ACT and New Zealand – Looking for volunteers.

* 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

Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter #269 are due to The Editor by 30th November, 2021.

VALE -

James (Jim) Kenneth King Browne – Queensland

James (Jim) Kenneth King Browne.



It is with much sadness to announce the passing of one of our Squadron Presidents Jim Browne. Jim enlisted in Dalby, Queensland 8th April, 1940 and was trained as a Wireless Air



Gunner. After training in Australia he embarked Sydney and disembarked Egypt in March 1941 joining the Middle East Pool until postings to 14, 55 and 267 Squadrons until his final operational posting to 458 Squadron on 8th October, 1942. He served with 458 until the 29th May, 1943 and was recommended for appointment to a Commissioned rank on 1st June, 1943. Jim was then posted to various OTUs in the UK presumably in the capacity as a trainer. He was repatriated to Australia in March of 1944 where he was honourably discharged from



the RAAF where he returned to his job as a grazier in Dalby. Jim remained in Dalby where he married Peggy and raised his sons (from right of photo) Arthur, Douglas (Jim seated) and Kenneth. Sympathies to Jim's sons and their families from all 458 Squadron Association members. Now resting with his beloved wife of 72 years. Blue Skies, Jim.

FLIGHT REPORTS



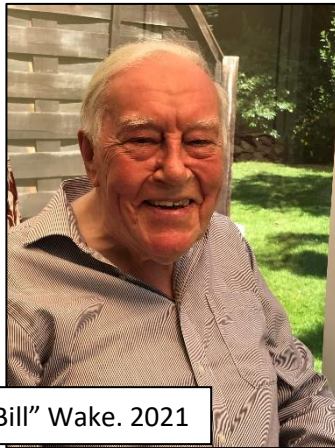
United Kingdom Flight Report by Keith Wilkinson

We have some brilliant news to report from the UK.

It's come to light that a 458 Squadron wireless operator / rear



Mr Wilfred "Bill" Wake. 2021



gunner is still alive and kicking and living on the outskirts of London at the age of 99. He is Wilfred "Bill" Wake who joined 458 Squadron in 1943 at Protville and also served at Bone and Alghero.

Bill, who was born in Clapham, London, was in the crew of Canadian pilot John William "Jack" Downs. Sadly, Flying Officer Downs from Welland in Ontario died during the war from jaundice and malaria in September 1943 at the age of 21. He was buried at the Medjez-El-Bab War Cemetery in Tunisia. After the death of F/O Downs, Mr



Bill's crew in Morocco and on their way out to 458 Squadron with a Wellington from Britain in 1943. Bill is on the left.

Wake became a "spare bod" WopAG and served with a number of different crews. He was promoted to Warrant Officer.

I have made contact with him and have had a good chat over the phone. He has a

very clear memory of his 458 Squadron

days and plans to get in touch with me again soon with some further information about his experiences. It's superb to hear from him. His "discovery" - if that's the right word - has caused great excitement. Bill had initially trained as a pilot in America but was rejected from the course and after re-mustering in Canada was sent to Florida to be trained instead as a WOP/AG. He went over from the UK on a troop ship escorted by three destroyers when there was U-boat activity in the rough seas. He joined his Wellington crew back in Britain and they flew out to North Africa to join 458 via Talbenny, Hurn and Morocco. Among the many sorties he flew on was the bombing of Bastia Harbour. After the war he worked for the National Health Service for 36 years, retiring back in 1983. We found out about Mr Wake from a friend who contacted us. The friend told me: "He is remarkable for 99 and still drives. He could pass for someone years younger and his memory is very sharp." Until we were notified out of the blue, the only former member of the squadron we were aware of, still living in the UK, was Charles Humbles. So, it is wonderful to hear about Bill and I look forward to hearing some of his stories. This development has led me to wonder - could there be even more 458 veterans still out there somewhere who we have either been unaware of, or who have lost touch? It seems unlikely, but certainly not out of the question. We have been contacted in recent weeks by the children of a couple of other 458 men from England who had died some time ago. We hope to tell their stories in the next edition of this newsletter. It's always great to hear from the families of veterans who are always most welcome to get in touch with us, no matter how much or little they might know of their loved ones' time with The Squadron.

CHARLES HUMBLER

Some not so good news about Squadron President Charles Humbles. I phoned his wife Joyce in July on her 101st birthday and she said Charles was in hospital after having a fall at home. Charles, who is 99, tripped in their dining room whilst getting some cheese and biscuits. However, she said he was not seriously hurt and has no

broken bones. He has been kept in for checks and treatment and she said he was due back home later that week.

She said: "I was only just talking to Charlie. He phoned from hospital. He can't wait to get home and says we will celebrate my birthday when he is back. But I will probably have myself a gin and tonic at lunchtime."

The Squadron Association wishes them both all the very best.

JACK CHRISTIANSON



We have received a photograph from the Isles of Scilly of a plaque that has been erected there in memory of former 458 Squadron pilot Jack Christianson who died in December. He and family were frequent visitors to the islands off the south-west tip of England. He never forgot flying over

them in his Wellington en route to join the squadron in 1943. The plaque has been placed close to one of his favourite views out to sea.



Victoria Flight Report by Roland Orchard

On a fine Melbourne Autumn Day, nine of us marched to the Shrine of Remembrance. It was great to be marching again after last year's cancellation due to covid-19. This year numbers had been limited to 5,000 (which was later revised to 8,000 very close to the day) in an abundance of caution (some say misuse of power; there are zero cases of covid at this time) by the Labor state government. This over-restrictive approach kept numbers away (and possibly in protest). Those who marched were: Brian Paroissien, his son Nigel, Matthew Willemin, Vayle Hallam (assisted by carer Chris), Neil Flentje, Roland Orchard, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard. This year we carried the Banner and the picture of the Wellington (as Air Force cadets present at the march were already assigned to other duties).

Two of the many highlights were having Flight Lieutenant Matthew Willemin, grandson of 458 Veteran Warrant Officer Mervyn Lee marching with us. And Vayle Hallam, daughter of Fl Lt Roy Montrowe who served with 148 Squadron RAF - 458 aircrews were detached to 148 RAF in 1942 at Kabrit, Egypt for a number of months. Nine of us attended the Annual General Meeting.

ABC TV covered the entire march. We appear at 28 mins 35 sec at the youtube webpage link: <https://youtu.be/h973RfSeZis>

Melbourne ANZAC Day 2021

Photographs taken by Neil Flentje.



458 Squadron about to step off. Melbourne ANZAC Day 2021



Flt Lt Matthew Willemin heading the 458 Banner as we head toward The Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne ANZAC Day 2021



458 Squadron ANZAC Day march participants. Neil Flentje taking the photo. Melbourne ANZAC Day 2021



458 Squadron ANZAC Day march participants AGM. Neil Flentje taking the photo. Melbourne ANZAC Day 2021



New South Wales Flight Report by Stephen Bruce

I should reflect on Anzac Day in Sydney which as usual a great day and well supported by members, family and associates all being welcomed as part of the 458 NSW family. Our reunion at Castlereagh Boutique Hotel was somewhat different as we

decided to forgo lunch and opt for an upmarket morning tea, due to RAAF leading the march in recognition of the centenary of formation. Everyone in attendance was looking forward to our reunion at Williamtown and as usual there was an abundance of stories relating to our veterans and family since the cessation of WW2. I would like to acknowledge the splendid and tireless efforts of VP Rob Wilkinson who has spent an enormous amount of time in arranging the format of our delayed reunion at Williamtown. Rob and I made a few visits to the area to choose site, accommodation and activities for the weekend, but Rob orchestrated all the hotel event timings and transportation needs with RAAF base Williamtown which was indeed a huge task and a brilliant plan which will be hopefully held around 11th November if possible. *(See Reunion Report on page 10 – Ed)*

Sydney ANZAC Day 2021 attendees -

Bitmeads x 3 – Bev, Peter and Jenny (Higgs), Ron Munkman, Beryl Dodds, Rob and Carolin Wilkinson, Julie Beashel and Melanie Atkinson (both nee Alexander), Charles and Pat Baker, Gary and Lureen Kirkman, Stephen, Anita and Adam Bruce and Ben Jays, James and Simon Wardle.



James & Simon Wardle on the banner, with Charles Baker in the middle



Rob Wilkinson, Stephen and Adam Bruce



Carolin Wilkinson, Beryl Dodds (nee Munkman), Bev Bitmead



L-R Julie Beashel, Melanie Atkinson
Both Daughters of Peter Alexander
Table behind - Pat Baker, Lureen Kirkman (nee Baker), Charles Baker, Gary Kirkman. Lureen is the daughter of "Red Jack" Baker, and Charles is the son of "Black Jack" Baker!



L-R Ron Munkman, Anita Bruce, Julie Beashel, Melanie Atkinson, Rob Wilkinson, Peter Bitmead and Jenny Higgs (nee Bitmead)



South Australia Flight Report by Rick Michell

I have recently heard from Rick's daughter, Ali, who informs me that Rick is currently unwell. On behalf of all 458ers we wish him a speedy recovery. *Editor*



West Australia Flight Report by Nick Bertram

Huge news from the West - Another 458er found living in Perth! We were contacted via the 458 Squadron website by Richard Hicks in the UK informing us that his father PO Thomas Hicks served with the 458 Squadron and is currently living in Perth. On the 14th of April I met Tom (And daughter Jane - who was visiting from NSW) at the Swan Care Facility at Bentley Park where Tom resides. Turns out it's only a 15min drive from my house!

Tom turned 100 in January this year and received a letter from the Queen. He spoke of his time in WW2 and being posted to 458. Tom had a great story about Col. McKenzie which I encourage you to read on the website.

Tom also had a large collection of 458 Squadron Newsletters, he has allowed me to take them home and sort them to see if he had

any of the newsletters we were missing. Unfortunately, he didn't have any of the missing ones, but he did have a complete #35 newsletter from 1958! We previously only had the first 2 pages in the newsletter published on the website. Ironically, this edition was the Perth All-States reunion of which my grandfather Nick was in attendance from SA.

Tom is moving down to Albany shortly to be closer to his other daughter Clare (Tom also has another son, Keith, along with Richard in the UK)

Clare contacted me the other week to say Tom was very keen on making the trip to NSW for the 458 Squadron Reunion, he had been walking daily to get fit for the trek across to the eastern states.

Unfortunately, the reunion had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 border restrictions, but none the less it says a lot about Tom's character and his spirit to be contemplating a trip like that as a 100-year-old! Tom immigrated to WA in 1971 and has enjoyed life in Australia ever since.



Nick's visit with Tom



Tom standing 2nd from left with his crew.

Thank you for your service Tom and great to meet you. Please visit Tom's story on the 458 Squadron website.

Cheers. Nick Bertram.

<https://www.458raafsquadron.org/honour-roll/servicemens-stories/hicks-th>



458 Squadron Association

80th Anniversary Reunion 2021.

GOING AHEAD IN NOVEMBER!

Due to the Covid Lockdowns in NSW & Victoria, it was decided to postpone the Reunion in July. We have now reset and are pleased to announce the new dates.

Saturday 13th - Monday 15th November, 2021

We have had to make some changes to the November programme for our Reunion, given planned construction works on the RAAF Base runway for November – February. Whilst all those works are still yet to be authorised by a Parliamentary Committee, it is quite likely we will not have the opportunity to see the jets taking off, and may not be able to do an extended tour of the RAAF Base.

However, we will certainly have some interaction with base personnel, and the opportunity to make appropriate presentations. So, let's not allow that to deter us from holding a memorable and enjoyable event to honour the men who served with 458 Squadron and the significance of the 80th Anniversary of its formation at RAAF Williamtown. A more detailed programme to be advised shortly. We had 71 people signed up for the July Reunion, so sincerely hope we can look forward to all of those, and hopefully more, booking in for November!

Registration form on page 17 for those who have not previously registered. Please call Rob Wilkinson on 0418 969 241 if you have further enquires about the Reunion.

458 Emails

Sent -6/4/21

From- Hugh Holland

Hello Roland. I have just finished reading "We Find and Destroy" even though I have had access to the book for years, I only came around



to reading it recently after I had discovered my Dad's log book among his things. I was interested to read (on P155 of the book 2002 Edition) about a Wellington that needed to ditch off the coast of Sardinia in the early hours of 15th August 1944 due to bad visibility and low fuel. The Captain was W/O Fell and, according to my Dad's log book, Dad (Dennis George Holland Flt SGT at the time) was the Co Pilot. Dad never really spoke much about his time during the War but, in his final years, he often related, with mirth, his experiences of having to ditch in the Mediterranean. He was a relative late comer to the Squadron having only completed his training in late 1943.

According to his log book, his first time in a Wellington was in March 1944. **Regards Hugh Holland**

Iconic photo of the ditched Wimpy from The 458 Squadron Official Photo Albums on pg 10. Thanks for the great story Hugh. Ed.

Sent -6/4/21

From- Peggy Hull

Dear Roland,

Many thanks for sending me the Newsletter. Aged 97 and all I still value so much my link with 458 and reading past memories. I do appreciate very much receiving the Newsletter. As Editor you do an outstanding job. Best wishes, Peggy Hull.

Thanks Peggy. I appreciate the sentiment. All the very best to you – Ed.

Air Force Centenary Celebrations

by Jeremy Orchard



On the 31st of March, 2021 the Royal Australian Air Force celebrated 100 years since its founding on 31/3/1921. I was privileged to be a part of the special 100th Anniversary held at RAAF Base Point Cook. It was just 20 years later in July 1941 that 458 Squadron was formed.

RAAF Base Point Cook is the birthplace of the Australian Flying Corps and the Royal Australian Air Force. It was established in March 1913 as the location for the Central Flying School and is the oldest

continually operating military airfield in the world. Current serving Units include 21 Squadron, 100 Squadron, 1 Security Force Squadron, 1 Security Force Squadron 5 Rifle Flight, Australian Air Force Cadet Headquarters and the RAAF Museum.

I was delighted to have my photo taken by the official RAAF photographer W/OFF Don Kenny. Even more so because it was in front of two of the aircraft in which Dad, 458 Squadron Leader Gordon Orchard learned to become a pilot. The Link Trainer and the de Havilland DH82A Tiger Moth. Dad's flying logbook also shows him present at both RAAF Base Point Cook and RAAF Base Williams, 8km away (among a listing of many base locations far and wide).



Some of the many highlights of the evening included meeting the Air Force personnel as well as the most senior Air Force serving member in Victoria, Air Commodore Greg Frisina; the tour through the RAAF Museum, the fly-past from the P51 Mustang in perfect weather conditions, the presentations including a photo of Dad in the video presentation! the speeches and toasts. It was a truly fitting and memorable occasion that reminded us of the great sacrifices made by these men and women in service to our nation over the last century. Then. Now. Always.



458 Squadron Association Constitution

Modernisation Project

Article by Chris Orchard

Hello 458ers,

Our current Association **Constitution** consisting of five pages (soon to be 'housed' on our website, under

<https://www.458raafsquadron.org/about-us>) will be undergoing an

update or modernisation to make it fit for purpose for now and into the future. Recall that this Project was on the agenda at our

Conference Meeting in Canberra in late October 2019, where we discussed the future direction for our Association. It now feels like a

long time ago, with far less encumbrances back then than now are

(*consternation!*), but we will press on, onwards and upwards! It is

important to note that in updating our Constitution, the same intent,

objectives and goals will be preserved just as our much-loved 458

Men and Women would have wanted, however a wider view will

now be taken considering the capability of current technologies to

revolutionise the preservation of 458's legacy & footprint into the

future.

We will be placing the **Proposed Draft** under the current Constitution

and would like all Association members to review between now and

December 2021, and offer ideas/viewpoints/comments. With your

reply, keep in mind that we still need to maintain simplicity, brevity,

and have uppermost in our consideration the preservation and

ongoing improvement of our Association.

Please email all replies to: christopher.orchard1@defence.gov.au

THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL ASSOCIATION	
CONSTITUTION	
1.	Name: The name of the Council Association is THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL ASSOCIATION.
2.	Objects: The objects and purposes for which the Council Association exists are: (a) to protect and advance the interests of persons who have served with No. 458 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, and of their spouses, or widows, relatives and dependants of such persons.

where they will be collated for review.

A small sample of the proposed draft is shown to the left.



Eric J. Jewell Award 2021



ERIC JEWELL, GEORGE CONNORS AND JACK ANDERSON

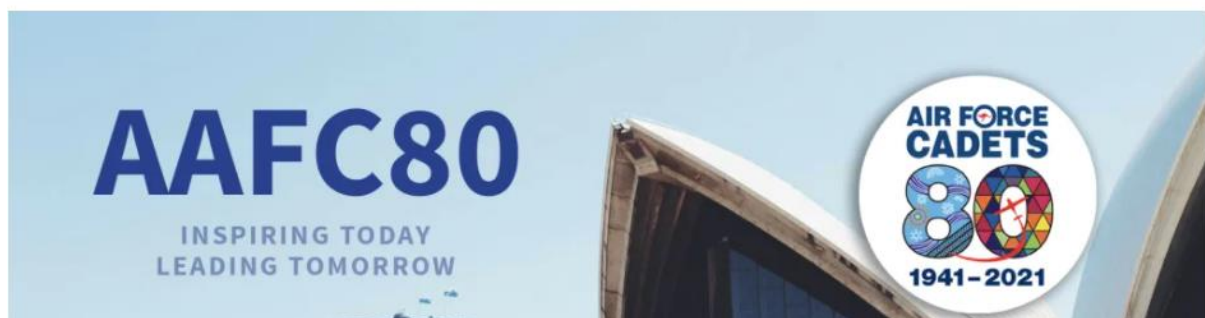
SQNLDR AAFC Chris Gibson of **3 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC)**, submitted an application to pursue support for AAFC's 80th anniversary, aptly titled **AAFC80**

<http://www.aafc.org.au/aafc80/>

AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE CADETS
REACH FOR THE STARS



Who We Are » What We Do » How To Join » Our Units » Our Supporters » News



The rewarding aspect of his application was the synchronicity that 458 and the AAFC share. Both testify to remarkable & important achievements in their own ways, and take a moment to consider that

the AAFC continues to build confidence & leadership into our Country's youth, things that certainly cannot be underestimated. Celebrating their 80th Anniversary this year alongside ours brings to heart why the Eric J. Jewell Award (encapsulating both Eric and the 458 Squadron Family) is significant and to be highly-valued. Their anniversary month is in June, and they are dedicating a number of activities during this year, while ours is the 10th of July, where we will endeavour to realise it with both commemoration and celebrations later this year (and on that, we thank Rob Wilkinson and family for their supreme efforts! And in bearing the brunt of the setbacks & obstacles, yet still resolute!)

With benefits in building a closer relationship with the AAFC, the Award Committee approved the submitted application as a worthy Recipient, and in return, 458 will be receiving some valuable promotions. These will include appearing on the AAFC webpage (under the “**Our Supporters**” link, <http://www.aafc.org.au/our-supporters>), which will remain in place for several years to come,

AUSTRALIAN **AIR FORCE CADETS**
REACH FOR THE STARS



and gaining regular appearances on both the **3 Wing Facebook** and **Instagram** sites. Chris Gibson assures that most Cadets are ongoing followers of these platforms, therefore with so many agile-minded & imaginative viewers, who knows where some of the future directions for 458 Squadron Association could “take off” to. Onward and upward!



458 SQUADRON CAPS AND POLO SHIRTS

NOW AVAILABLE

Baseball style caps and Polo shirts with embroidered 458 Squadron Crest. 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, Victoria Flight Historian.



Caps – AUD \$42:00 plus Packaging & Postage

Shirts - AUD\$55:00 plus Packaging & Postage.

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

See our Memorabilia Page on our website for more details and more items available.

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

DONATIONS.

Thanks for the very kind and generous donations to 458 Squadron Association. If you wish to donate, please see the donation page on our website or contact the editor.

These donations help in ongoing costs of the 458 Squadron Newsletter Publication, projects such as the recent 458 Cap & Polo Shirt & 458 Website management by [*Potentweb](#)



458 Squadron Association 80th Anniversary Reunion **Registration Form**

Dates –

Saturday 13th November – Monday 15th November, 2021.

Location-

Williamtown, New South Wales.

Staying at the Mercure Hotel, Williamtown Airport.

RSVP – SUNDAY 31st August, 2021

I would like to attend the 458 Squadron Association 2021 Reunion

Name/s of attendees- _____

Contact Details (phone/mobile)- _____

Email Address- _____

I require ____ nights stay at the Mercure Hotel

I require a Single Room / Twin Share Room / Double Room (please circle)

Scan/copy and email or post replies to robwilk@bigpond.net.au

Postal Address – Rob Wilkinson. 36 Finch Avenue, East Ryde. NSW 2113

Payment Options- *(\$100 DEPOSIT PER PERSON REQUIRED)

Online - ACRA Pty Ltd trading as Group Travel Management

BSB: 633000

ACCT: 127479830

Cheque - replies with cheque made payable to Group Travel Management.

Mail to – Mr. Rob Wilkinson. 36 Finch Ave. East Ryde. NSW. 2113

Credit Card- Please contact Rob Wilkinson on 0418 969 241. Credit Card payments will incur a 1% Visa & Mastercard merchant fee

*Please note that all deposits are refundable up to 30 days prior to the Reunion as 50% deposits have to be made to Mercure Hotel 30 days prior to check in.

If there are any further questions re payments contact Rob Wilkinson on 0418 969 241

PLEASE NOTE – THOSE WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY PAID & REGISTERED PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL ROB TO CONFIRM REGISTRATION FOR THE NEW DATES IN NOVEMBER.