

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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Bill Wake – United Kingdom



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

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Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter #272 are due to The Editor by 30th November, 2022.

VALE -

Pat Lyndon. (Widow of Bob Lyndon). Pat passed away a couple of years ago. Thanks to daughter Robyn Lyndon for informing editor. Condolences to you and your family, Robyn.

FLIGHT REPORTS



United Kingdom Flight Report by Keith Wilkinson



Congratulations to our Squadron Co-President Bill Wake who has been celebrating his 100th birthday (see picture). Bill, a rear gunner/wireless operator with 458 Squadron, has so far had four parties thrown for him to mark his centenary, and a fifth may be on the way.

On the day of his birthday, he was taken out for a meal near Dorking in England with two sisters - aged 84 and 91 - and other family members. He was seated in an old wooden chair full of carvings.

"It was a big thing - like King Henry V111 might have used," Bill tells me amid his characteristic laughter.

With his usual sense of humour, he adds: "There were three celebrations going on in the pub at the same time and the car park was jammed full. There was my 100th birthday, a Christening, and a 70th birthday, which is no great shakes, is it? I wonder why they bother about a 70th."

Other celebrations for Bill were organised by friends he meets regularly at a cafe, his neighbours, and other family members. Congratulations are also in order for Joyce, the wife of Squadron Co-President Charles Humbles. Charles recently celebrated his 100th birthday but his wife has now reached the age of 102. She refers to Charles as "my toy boy".

Charles, Joyce and Bill - and the rest of the UK - have had to contend with record-shattering hot temperatures of more than 40 degrees centigrade. Whilst that is nothing too out of the ordinary for our Australian members, it's unheard of in England which is not geared up for scorching weather, and very few homes have air conditioning. "It was terrible," Joyce told me, after the temperatures dropped to more normal levels. "We couldn't do anything. We have two fans now, and that helped a lot. We moved into the front room which was cooler and then when the sun moved round, we went back to the back room. We are both okay but we are still getting over it." Bill Wake felt the heat too, but it didn't seem to bother him too much. "I still went into town, two or three miles away on the bus. I met my friends and did the shopping, like I do twice a week. The peak was 40 degrees and where I was it was about 39. Oddly enough, I slept better than normal."

I asked Bill how he had coped with the hot weather on the Squadron in North Africa. He said: "By the time we joined the Squadron, we had got used to it. When we landed in Morocco in June, it must have been 40 degrees then."

"I don't remember anyone on the Squadron complaining about the heat. I used to sleep quite well there too in the tent. I had a bed made of materials the Germans had left behind. I had an Irvin suit that was fur lined and I slept on top of it in place of a mattress. When you got back from a trip you were tired so you slept well."

Happy Birthday to Bill and Joyce from all 458ers.



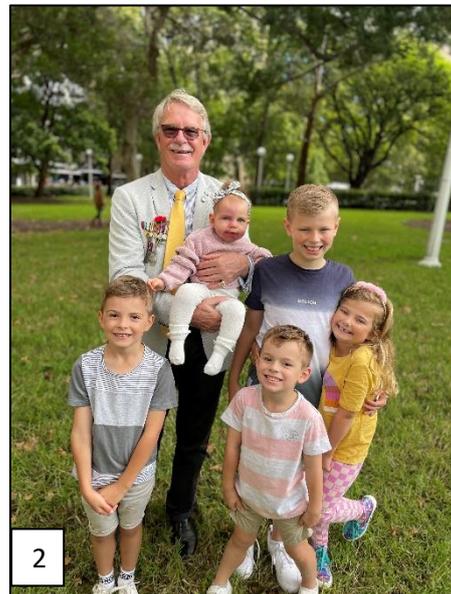
South Australia Flight Report by Rick Michell

No Report this edition. A warm cheerio to Rick and all members in South Australia.



New South Wales Flight Report by Stephen Bruce

What a great day Anzac Day 2022 turned out to be. We were well represented this year in Sydney with 18 attendees and it was a typical picture-perfect Sydney Autumn day. Our march off time was back to our traditional timing of 11:00am and we were lucky enough to be amongst two great pipe and drum bands which ensured a speedy march. The crowds were large and the applause was heartfelt. As expected, many of us were still on a high after the success of our Squadron's 80th Reunion in Williamtown which ensured a great lunchtime catch-up at our traditional location, The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. Regards to all, **Stephen Bruce**



Clockwise from top left- 1-NSW Flight in full stride. 2- Rob Wilkinson and Grandchildren Willow, Luca, Riley, Jesse and Harper. 3- Ben Jays, Stephen, Samantha, Anita and Adam Bruce. 4- Stephen & Samantha Bruce, Ron Munkman, David Wood in between the Pain-Bell sisters, Rob Wilkinson, Charles Baker, Melanie Alexander, Peter Bitmead and Rob's Grandchildren, Luca, Jesse, Riley and Harper



West Australia Flight Report by Nick Bertram

ANZAC Day dawn service at Kings Park resumed in Perth this year, albeit with limited numbers. This was followed by the Perth March. The ABC network filmed the Service & Parade

https://iview.abc.net.au/show/anzac-day-march-perth-2022?utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared

The Bertram's (Nick, Jess, Charlie & Oliver) spent ANZAC Day in Broome this year. We set off from Perth on our 7-week WA North west adventure on the 16th of April returning on the 2nd of June.



Towing a Jayco Eagle Outback camper we visited Karijini, Eighty Mile Beach, Broome, Cape Leveque, Bungle Bungles, Lake Argyle, Port Hedland, Karratha, Dampier, Onslow, Exmouth, Bullara Station, Ningaloo Station, Coral Bay, Quobba Station, Carnarvon Space

Museum & Geraldton. Our ANZAC day was spent exploring Broome, we had lunch at Matso's Brewery (Drinks, food & footy), Malcolm Douglas Crocodile Park & Sunset on beautiful Cable Beach.



Oliver (L) & Charlie (R)



Jess & Nick
A photo of our setup (From Karijini)



I'm extremely grateful to be able to enjoy our ANZAC Day in the manner we did, thinking about all those that gave so much so we may have these freedoms. We had a fantastic trip and very lucky to live in such an amazing country. **Regards Nick Bertram**

Victoria Flight Report by Roland Orchard

2022 ANZAC Day Report

On a near perfect Melbourne autumn day, 18 of us marched to the Shrine of Remembrance. This year we returned to normal and even marched a block further with our starting point at Swanston St./Collins St. Earlier some of us attended the 6 am Dawn Service. One of the many highlights was again having Squadron Leader Matthew Wullemin, grandson of 458 Veteran Warrant Officer Mervyn Lee, leading 458 Squadron members. SQDNLDR Wullemin's son Cooper proudly marched alongside his dad. Those who marched were: Gill & Joe Somers and their 2 granddaughters Hazel & Violet, Brian Paroissien, his son Nigel, Matthew Wullemin and son Cooper, Neil Flentje, Rod Flentje, Chris Wurr and grandson Hutch, John Boydell, Roland Orchard, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, John and Thomas Marino. This year we carried the picture of the Wellington and two Australian Air Force Cadets carried the Banner; Vinay, Leading Air Cadet of 415 SQN and his fellow Cadet. Please visit our website for a full report of the day with more photos. [Reports from the Day < Anzac Day | 458 RAAF Squadron](#)



FEATURE ARTICLE

The following is an excerpt from a 458 Squadron story researched and written by Ian Berick. It is self-evident as to why Ian wrote this story. Thank you, Ian, for helping to preserve the memories our gallant 458 Squadron Veteran Heroes.

A TEACHER AT WAR Discovering my Headmaster's Service with 458 Squadron RAAF

By

Ian L Berick © 2022

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PREFACE

I didn't have much to do with my High School Headmaster Mr Jack Guthrie during my years at high school, mostly because I kept out of trouble and out of his way. Many years later I have wondered, who was this distinctive man in the billowing academic gown?

What made my search more interesting is the fact that in my Air Training Corps days I had won the 458 Squadron Association (Victorian Flight) award.

What I have uncovered has been a real eye opener.

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of one new 458 Squadron RAAF crew which was based in the Mediterranean theatre during the latter part of 1943.

More particularly it is about my former High School Headmaster Mr Jack Guthrie.

Although designated as an Australian unit, 458 Squadron operated as part of the Royal Air Force (RAF) structure under Article XV of the 1939 'Ottawa Agreement'.

The squadron included personnel from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and South Africa, and during the course of the war also included personnel from Newfoundland, Southern Rhodesia and America.

On 13 May 1943 the war in North Africa came to an end with the defeat of the German, Italian and Vichy French forces by the Allied forces. On 9 September the Allied invasion of mainland Italy commenced with landings at Salerno and Taranto in southern Italy. Of interest later in this story, is that Foggia on the Italian east coast, with its important airfields, was occupied by the Allies in October 1943.

On 10 October 1943, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Bruce R McKenzie of the South African Air Force (SAAF), 458 Squadron RAAF, left its base of three and a half months at Protville, Tunisia, and took up residence at Bône a coastal city with civilian aerodrome in the northeast corner of Algeria, North Africa.

458 Squadron operated Vickers-Armstrong Wellington twin engine long-range medium bombers on anti-submarine, anti-shipping, convoy escort, reconnaissance, and air sea rescue (ASR) operations over the Mediterranean. It also conducted reconnaissance and bombing raids on German occupied Italian and Vichy French territory, including the seaways around the Mediterranean islands of Malta, Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily. Much of the flying was conducted at night at low level.

Depending on the target or type of operation, the Wellington could carry torpedos, mines, bombs, incendiaries, flares or survival equipment. 458 Squadron Mk. XIII Wellingtons or 'Stickleback' were fitted with 'Special Equipment' (SE) which was a term used for the secret Mk.III Air-to-Surface Vessel (ASV) radar fitted in the aircraft and used to detect surface vessels including submarines at night or while flying in cloud. Later Mk.XIV Wellingtons were also fitted with a Leigh Light which was a high-powered retractable searchlight

designed to illuminate targets at night for attack. They also had a more sophisticated Mk.III ASV radar in the nose.

458 Squadron Wellingtons usually had a crew of six being the Captain/Pilot, 2nd Pilot, Navigator/Bomb Aimer, and three Wireless Operator/Air Gunners (WOAG or WAG) who, depending on their qualifications, could share the rolls of SE operator, wireless operator or rear gunner. The WOAG's would also operate any nose and waist guns if required.

New flight crews were usually 'made up' while undergoing operational training at one of the many Operational Training Units (OTU) or Ferry Training Units (FTU) in the United Kingdom (UK). They tended to stay together to develop team cohesion. The FTUs were established to bring together aircraft and crews for long distance delivery flights. Crews were attached to FTUs for the duration of the delivery from the UK to their destination, in this case Shallufa, Egypt. Each aircraft was equipped with long range fuel tanks and the crews trained accordingly.

THE NEW CREW

Personnel service records and the 458 Squadron Operations Record Books (ORB) show that Jack Guthrie was part of a 'new' crew which came together at 303 FTU Talbenny, Pembrokeshire, Wales on 18 April 1943:

1. Captain/Pilot – 405312 RAAF, Flying Officer (Pilot) Douglas Gordon HOWIE, age 25, born in Kingaroy, Queensland (Qld), single, a clerk in the Court of Petty Sessions Office.
2. 2nd Pilot – 1315187 RAFVR, Sergeant (Pilot) Hugh Ferguson BRYSON, age 21, born Pewsey, Wiltshire, England, single, unemployed.
3. Navigator – 409474 RAAF, Flying Officer (Observer) Jack GUTHRIE, BA (Melb. 1941), age 33, born in Clifton Hill, Victoria (Vic), married, a teacher of draughting, arts and crafts at Traralgon High School, Vic.
4. SE Operator – 401395 RAAF, Flight Sergeant (WOAG) John Robert RAMSAY, age 23, born in Richmond, Vic, single, a postal clerk.

5. Wireless Operator – R117650 RCAF, Warrant Officer (WOAG)
W J M BRADY.
6. Rear Gunner – 400758 RAAF, Flight Sergeant (WOAG)
Frederick John Nelson MORRIS, age 28, born in Mosman, New South Wales (NSW), married, a window dresser.

The RAAF personnel records of the four Australians show that they probably met earlier in their training. Ramsay and Morris had been posted to 3 Wireless School (WS) Winnipeg Canada in April 1941 and pretty much shadowed each other (with some deviations) all the way to 6 (Coastal [C]) OTU Thornaby, North Yorkshire, where they joined Howie. The three were then posted to 303 FTU Talbenny, where Guthrie joined them. Together, the four were posted to the Middle East Pool in Egypt, then to 5 Middle East Training School (METS) Shallufa, Egypt and finally to 458 Squadron. Records are not available for Bryson and Brady, but it can be reasonably assumed that they also joined the Australians at or before 303 FTU.

Howie D G: RAAF personnel records

(Continue reading online www.458raafsquadron.org)

OPERATIONS BEGIN

Nine days after arriving at 458 Squadron F/O Howie took his crew on their first operational mission. The ORB shows that the first sortie took place on 16 October 1943 in Wellington ‘G’ taking off from Bône at 1320 hours on a U-boat (German submarine) hunt north of Cap de Fer (west of Bône), landing at 0030 hours. This sortie involved seven aircraft and was initiated by the sighting of a U-boat by the crew of a Lockheed Hudson aircraft. On this flight Ramsay was the rear gunner, Brady the SE operator and Morris the wireless operator. Howie and Bryson were the pilots and Guthrie the navigator.

Their second sortie...(Continue reading online)

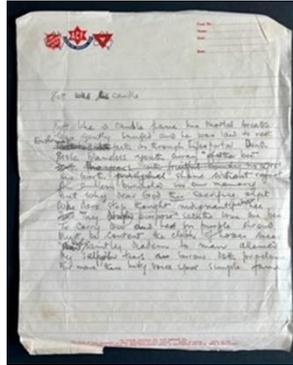
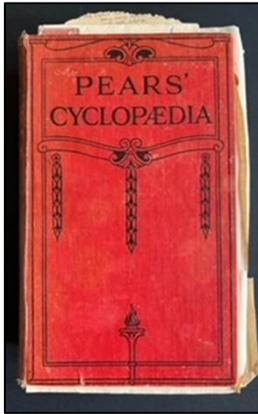
Editor’s note- I urge everyone to read the full and moving account of Jack Guthrie and his crew as told by author Ian Berick on our website <https://www.458raafsquadron.org/honour-roll/servicemens-stories/guthrie-j>

Many thanks to Ian for writing such a brilliant story about the Guthrie/Howie crew.

A Hidden Jewel.

a gem of a story by Roland Orchard.

I recently had a 458 Squadron website enquiry from Vicki Sach stating she had bought a book at a Kilsyth (Victoria) op shop for \$1 and found some very interesting memorabilia within said book. A 'hidden Jewel' so to speak. As Vicki flipped through the pages of the book 'Pears Cyclopaedia', she came across an



original handwritten poem called 'In Memoriam', 1942 newspaper clippings of this same published poem, envelopes addressed to the author and some hand drawn sketches.

Unwilling to let these 'finds' pass into obscurity, Vicki *had* to share her find with 458 Squadron Association. Vicki later stated, "I love research but it wasn't hard to find the info on Eric."



Vicki had inadvertently discovered memorabilia once belonging to our very own 458 Squadron Veteran, the late **Eric John Jewell**.

When Eric's foster nephew Peter Gray was told of Vicki's amazing find, Peter had this to say. "What an amazing find, Vicki, and thanks for drawing it to our attention. The version of that poem which is on the 458 Squadron website, is in a book I have containing "good copies" of a number of Eric's mainly wartime poems. Eric (who was our "foster" uncle) was extremely creative and talented. He wrote hundreds of poems, was a prolific painter and drawer, and was a very keen and skilled photographer. We are fortunate to have many fine examples of his creative talents. I can shed some light on some of the other items you included, Vicki. The first envelope was sent to

Eric by his parents who lived at Invergordon just out of Numurkah, near Shepparton. I assume it was sent to him in Tasmania where he was training. The second one was sent to him by my grandmother with whom Eric boarded when he came to Melbourne. I recognise the handwriting! Eric became like a son to her hence him being our "uncle"; not a blood relative but as good as! In fact, he stayed with, and looked after, my grandmother until her passing in 1987."

The 2 drawings are very much in Eric's style so we could safely put them down to him, while the inscription in the Cyclopaedia (Interesting that it's not an "ENcyclopaedia"!) is to DE & EJ Jewell. Eric had a sister Dora Elizabeth and he was Eric John."

Peter went on to say, "My uncle, who passed away in 2015 aged 94, had been in care for about 5 years. Eric was a great "collector" (some would say hoarder!) so when we sold his house after about 12 months in care, we had to get rid of all the contents, much of which went to op shops. That probably included the book you found. As you'd appreciate from your own experiences, I imagine, there's not much demand for many of the possessions that have been collected over decades even if some of them seem precious to those to whom they belonged! We were fortunate, though, to have a range of things by which we remember Eric, not that we need "things" to do that! He was an important part of our lives!



As an aside, though, we do have many of his uniform items. I retired as a school principal earlier this year and last ANZAC Day (2021) I had 3 of our students come out during our school ANZAC ceremony, dressed in Eric's gear. I thought you might like the attached image! (Caulfield Primary School ANZAC Day 2021. Left to right Daniel, Sam and Matilda. At the time all were Year 6 students.)



After many emails between Vicki and Peter, Vicki decided to hand back the book and its contents to Peter and his family for safe keeping with all of the other treasures once owned by Eric.

(L-Vicki handing back Eric's book and contents to Peter. Please note one of Vicki's father's paintings 'THE RED ARROWS IN AUSTRALIA'. Read Norm Clifford's thrilling account on Facebook of how this

and another Red Arrows painting came about.)

So why did Vicki bother to research her find in the first place? The answer was revealed in Vicki's statement about her renowned father, aviation artist Norm Clifford. "My father is an Australian aviation artist who has done many paintings for the RAAF. He is now 95 years old and in aged care. I did a Facebook page for my father which has a lot of his paintings on it. "

<https://www.facebook.com/normancliffordaviationartist>

Vicki, on behalf of all of the 458 Squadron families around the world, and in particular the Gray family, I extend our thanks and gratitude for retrieving these riches and helping to preserve the memory of one of many heroic 458 Squadron RAAF Veterans. Vicki Sach, you are a diamond!

You can read Eric Jewell's story on the 458 Squadron Website.

<https://www.458raafsquadron.org/honour-roll/servicemens-stories/jewell-e-j>

This ties in nicely with the following announcement.

ERIC JEWELL AWARD WINNER FOR 2022



The Eric J. Jewell Award this year was presented to Cadet, **Nevaeh Frank**, from 314 (City of Wollongong) SQN AAFC.

Right-Cadet Nevaeh with CO of 314 Sqn AAFC, FLTLT Paul Adams.



Nevaeh is a very worthy recipient of Eric's Award. She was understandably very excited, along with her parents, when the good news was delivered. Eric's Award (a financial endowment) will provide support for her unique circumstances, and will help her realise growth & development, and her dreams. 458 applauds Nevaeh and her family. *"Fly high, Nevaeh, fly high!"* Eric would be very proud!

AAFC Squadron representatives are invited to submit an application for funding for new or current cadets and/or cadet programs for the 2023 Award. Refer to the page below to download the application form.

With compliments. The Gray Family & 458 Squadron Association.

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



458 SQUADRON ONLINE STORE

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

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



458 SQUADRON BADGE (VELCRO BACKED)



WELLINGTON PRINTS BY ARTIST DES KNOCK



WELLINGTON PRINTS BY ARTIST DES KNOCK