



**JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL**  
**Year 74 No. 274 July 2023**



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**Canada** – Adam & Cate Wagstaffe

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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)**  
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***Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter #275  
are due to The Editor by 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2023.***



## **FLIGHT REPORTS**

### **Canada Flight Report by Adam & Cate Wagstaffe**

Hello from North Vancouver, Canada.

As Robbie Burns would almost have said “The best laid schemes of Mice and Wagstaffe’s Gang aft agley” and so it is with our planned contribution for this edition.



We had been in contact with a family member of one of the Canadian Honour Roll and were expecting family information, photographs and RCAF history. The delay turned into months and then we sadly heard that the delay would be permanent as the family member had died.





This sad event did cause us pause and opened our discussion on researching the Canadian members of not just the Honour Roll but also the Nominal Roll. In so many cases the crew members of 458 were too young to have their own family so they were initially remembered by parents and siblings, perhaps cousins, uncles and aunts, but with the passage of time this moved to nieces and nephews and now perhaps (as with us) grand-nieces and nephews. This was not always the case as there are sons of crew now active on this site. (Shout out to Roland, Keith, Brett, Stephen just to name a few).




It is also true that the records, history, place of death and burial are much easier to find for those who died during the war than those who survived. Official records, Squadron OPS, Grave commissions, Official archives, Ancestry sites etc. While this helps us to research and honour those who died during the war, it can make it very difficult to find the family and learn the history of those that survived. The history, memories and photographs of the time spent with 458 are equally important to record if we can. Often lives lived beyond the war are filled with new memories and family and while the war experiences were life-changing events for the crews, they often become a brief mention at best for family members who have experiences of 30,40 or 50 years beyond the war.

So, for this entry we submit the brief initial research and photographs of the Canadian members of the RCAF who died serving with 458 Squadron RAAF. As with our previous entries our plan is to delve deeper into the individuals, but at least with this issue we can begin to put faces to the Canadian Honour Roll of 458. We do indeed want to tell the stories of the survivors as well as those who died during the war and ask any readers to send to us any information no matter how small, anecdotal, or old that they have on Canadian members of 458 that survived.





According to the 458 website, 1762 men served with 458. Of those, 1073 were Royal Australian Air Force, 577 were Royal Air Force, 94 were Royal Canadian Air Force, and 14 were Royal New Zealand Air Force. Again, according to the 458 website's Squadron Honour Roll, 32 are Canadian. 458 Squadron meet your Canadian Honour Roll:





1	<p><b>Andrew Aikman</b>          SN: R/93115          Residence: Fisher Street, Toronto, Ontario          Born: 1920</p>	
2	<p><b>Gordon John Banks</b>          SN: R/84883          Residence: Bridgetown, Nova Scotia          Born: July 24 1912</p>	

3	<p><b>Gerald Louis Barker</b>  SN: J/20378  Residence:  Winnipeg,  Manitoba  Died: 22 July 1943  (Age 26)</p>	
4	<p><b>Howard Eldon Bradley</b>  SN: R/119875  Residence:  Winnipeg,  Manitoba  Born: 1 Dec 1919</p>	
5	<p><b>Manley Lyall Brechin</b>  SN: J/20439  Residence:  Unknown  Died 24 August,  1943 (Age 20)</p>	
6	<p><b>Peter Edwyn Elkford Brown</b>  SN: R/92308  Residence:  Chilliwack, British  Columbia  Born: 1911</p>	

<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>***George Alexander Duncan Cameron</b> SN: R/111309 Residence: Bardowie, Stirlingshire Born: 12 August 1915</p>	
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>* Lloyd William Clark</b> SN: R/106933 Residence: Vancouver, British Columbia Born: 1922 Unit: 221 Squadron Aircraft</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>John Andrew Diggins</b> SN: J/12745 Residence: Mulgrave, Nova Scotia Born: 12 January 1923</p>	










<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>**John William Downs</b> SN: J/12886 Residence: Welland, Ontario Born: 1920</p>	
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Lawrence Harry Gleason</b> SN: J/17063 Residence: Unknown Born: Unknown</p>	
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>Bertram William Glickman</b> SN: J/10409 Residence: Montreal, Quebec Died: 12 Dec 1942</p>	
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>Donald Duncan Graham</b> SN: J/5999 Residence: Dutton, Ontario (Born in London, Ontario) Born: 1922</p>	





<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>Joseph Robert Grasley</b> SN: R/86232 Residence: Died: 29 April 1943</p>	
<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>Thomas Eric Griggs</b> SN: R/98819 Residence: Tisdale, Saskatchewan Born: Unknown</p>	
<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>William Charles Hailstone</b> SN: J/10642 Residence: Regina, Saskatchewan Born: 1918</p>	
<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>Robert William Joseph Hudson</b> SN: J/17587 Residence: Montreal, Quebec Died: 27 April 1943</p>	




<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>*A.L. Keith</b>  SN: R/90509  Residence:  Unknown  Died: 28 April  1943  Unit: 221  Squadron Aircraft</p>	
<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>Maurice  McAllister  Kempton</b>  SN: J/9516  Residence: Moose  Jaw,  Saskatchewan  Born: 1914</p>	
<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>Herbert Edwin  Kontzie</b>  SN: R/101976  Residence:  Waskada,  Manitoba  Born: 1919</p>	
<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>** Perry King</b>  SN: R/93340  Residence: St.  Thomas, Ontario  Born: 25 February  1922  Unit: 221  Squadron Aircraft</p>	






<p><b>22</b></p>	<p><b>** James Frederick Kirk</b> SN: R/95108 Residence: Hamiota, Manitoba Born: Unknown Unit: 221 Squadron Aircraft</p>	
<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>Gordon Herbert Lawson</b> SN: J/9691 Residence: Grandview, Manitoba Born: 1919</p>	
<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>*** Allison Frederick Weeks MacLeod</b> SN: R/72864 Residence: Breadalbane, Prince Edward Island Born: 3 July 1920 Unit: 221 Squadron Aircraft</p>	

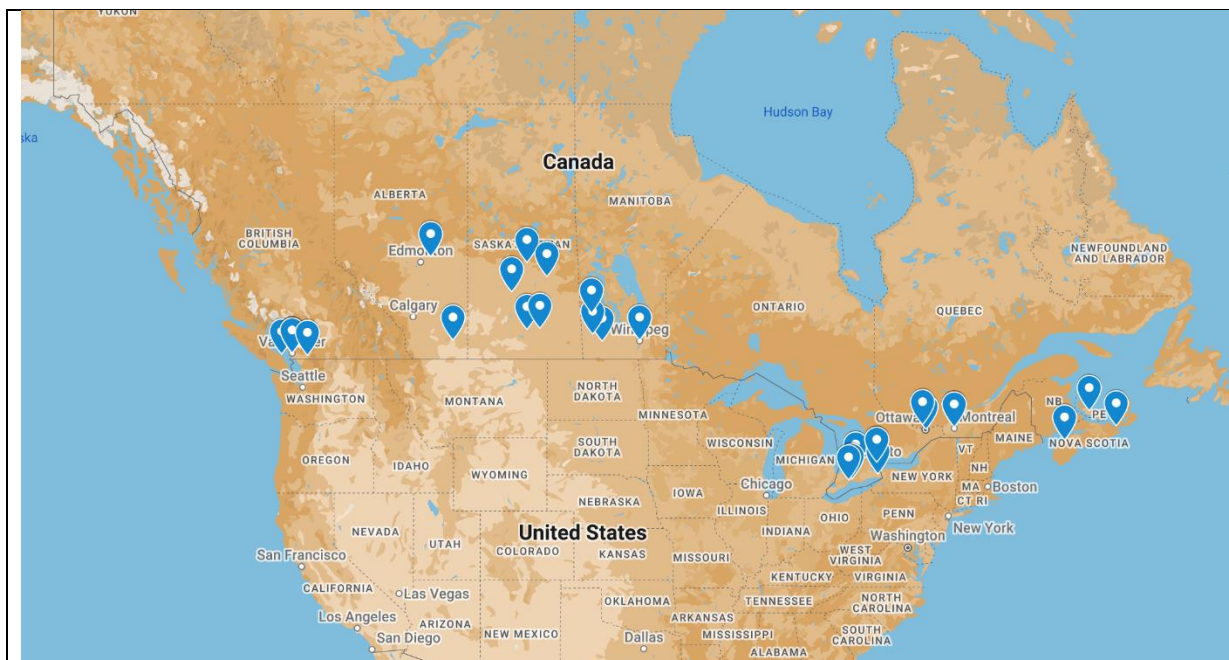
<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>Donald Hyatt McConechy</b>  SN: R/98941  Residence:  Paddockwood,  Saskatchewan,  Died: 13 July 1943  (age 20)</p>	
<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>Edwin Albert McCorkell</b>  SN: J/11132  Residence:  Wakefield,  Quebec  Born: 1920</p>	
<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>Arthur Robert Pagan</b>  SN: J/11125  Residence:  Saskatoon Sask.  Born: Unknown</p>	
<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>Albert Renton</b>  SN: J/13982  Residence:  Vancouver, British  Columbia  Died: 15 July 1943</p>	

<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>Thomas Peter Scandiffio</b>  SN: R/102787  Residence:  Toronto, Ontario  Died: 16 Jun 1943  (Age 31)</p>	
<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>Russell Clare Scott</b>  SN: J/20438  Residence:  Brandon,  Manitoba  Died: 24 August,  1943 (Age 24)</p>	
<p><b>31</b></p>	<p><b>**S.C. Shusterove</b>  SN: J/10666  Residence:  Unknown  Died: 23 Jan, 1943  Unit: 221  Squadron Aircraft</p>	
<p><b>32</b></p>	<p><b>Harold Ernest Stanley</b>  SN: R/91441  Residence: Minn,  Northern Nigeria  Born:1921</p>	

<p><b>33</b></p>	<p><b>** *Norman Albert Stelter</b> SN: R/105554 Residence: Lamont, Alberta Died: 20 April 1943 (Age 23)</p>	 <p><small>* WO2 N. A. STELTER</small></p>
<p><b>34</b></p>	<p><b>* Daniel Joseph Somers</b> SN: R/96079 Residence: Ottawa, Ontario Born: 1914</p>	
<p><b>35</b></p>	<p><b>Maxwell Harry Tarrison</b> SN: J/11225 Residence: Stratford, Ontario Born: 1920</p>	 <p><small>PL 10221</small></p>

<p><b>36</b></p>	<p><b>Frederic Kamiel Verhaest</b>  SN: J/20570  Residence:  Medicine Hat,  Alberta (Born in  Whitla, Alberta)  Born: 1918</p>	
<p><b>37</b></p>	<p><b>Robert Morris Westman</b>  SN: R/101306  Residence:  Vancouver, British  Columbia  Born: 21  September 1915.</p>	
<p><b>38</b></p>	<p><b>William Wallace Wright</b>  SN: R/87392  Residence:  Departure Bay,  Vancouver Island,  British Columbia.  Born:1922</p>	
<p><b>*** Not on Honour roll. Further investigation needed.</b>  <b>** 221 Squadron Wellington with a crew of 458 Squadron personnel.</b>  <b>* Death by illness or misadventure</b></p>		





Canadian Honour Roll: birthplace or last known residence.



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

In May we said a sad farewell to the much-loved Audrey Christianson. Her funeral took place at West Berkshire Crematorium and was well attended by family and friends. My wife and I were there to represent the 458 Squadron Association and also



as close friends who'd known her for many years. Audrey was the widow of 458 pilot Jack Christianson who died in 2020. She passed away peacefully, but suddenly and unexpectedly, in March at the age of 96. It was fitting that with her at the funeral, among the many family flowers, was her Teddy Bear – which she called Wellington. We'd seen Wellington with her at reunions and get-togethers. And right at the end, there he was – a poignant acknowledgement of the



role played by the RAF and 458 Squadron in the lives of Audrey and Jack.

Meanwhile, I have been in touch with 458 veterans in England and all is well. As well – that is – as it can be when you are centenarians. Bill Wake, the former wireless operator / rear gunner, has had a fall. And so too has Charles Humbles and his wife. Bill, who is 100, was in good spirits when I chatted with him and appeared to have recovered... “no damage except to my confidence,” he said. “It was a nasty fall. My face was very black. I went right down onto the concrete. I went to hospital and had a scan but there was nothing apparent. No broken bones.” Charles was one of the ground crew top men who looked after Wellington engines for 458 Squadron. He is 101 now and fell while going to the aid of his wife Joyce, who will soon be 103. He told me: “Joyce fell in the porch and smashed the window. I tried to help her and fell over as well.”

Joyce fractured her right arm but Charles escaped without injury. The couple were taken to hospital and released later the same day. Both seem to be doing well back home.



On a brighter note, there is good news regarding one of the two Wellington bomber survivors on display in England. Restoration has been completed on the aircraft at the Royal Air Force Museum Midlands (Cosford).

After more than a decade of painstaking work, it looks magnificent. It is now the centrepiece of the new Bomber Command exhibition at the museum. Just before it was officially unveiled to the public, I was allowed to get close up and even see inside to photograph the



aircraft – as seen here in the Squadron News. Thanks to the RAF Museum, both Jack Christianson and Audrey had seen this Wellington some years ago while

under restoration at the Conservation Centre. It is now in the ‘War in the Air Hangar’, having been wheeled over there by staff and volunteers.

The other surviving Wellington is at Brooklands in England. This too is looking superb. Without its linen skin, the geodetic frame is visible.



Like the exhibit at Cosford, this Wellington is not open to the public to explore inside. But with special permission, and under escort, Brooklands kindly let me

do just that to take some pictures. It was the third time I had been inside the Brooklands Wellington. See photo left. On the first





occasion I was with the late Norman Duke, a former 458 flight correspondent who was a squadron navigator and also a volunteer on the restoration of the plane, which was recovered from Loch Ness in Scotland. My

thanks to Brooklands and Cosford for their assistance. I know a number of our squadron's veterans, who are no longer with us, did see these two preserved planes. It meant a lot to them that Wellingtons are on public display. And it means a lot to their families around the world. They are a memorial to the airmen who died in them and a reminder of the courage of all those who flew in them.



### **Queensland Flight Report by Brett Taylor**

Since the first Q flight newsletter in March this year I have received correspondence from three families of 458 ex-servicemen. One was from Peter Byrne the nephew of A.C. (Bunny) Byrne a tail gunner in Mel Priest's crew and a very good friend of Bernie McLoughlin, my father's second pilot. Peter commented on the photograph Lawrie Leguay took of the white Wellington Q taking off in slush in Bone in February 1944 which was included in that March newsletter. Peter says that Bernie, insisted that my father (S/L "Bill" Taylor) was piloting that plane, taking off for an operation after collecting Lawrie Leguay and flying him to Bone that day. Pilots log books show Mel Priest flew HF278 on 28 February and my father flew it on 7<sup>th</sup> March, so more definitive information is needed. Another email was received from Margaret Hackett, daughter of Brian Woodhead. Brian was also from Adelaide so Margaret and I

worked out that at times we had both attended the same venues without knowing our father's connections. Margaret knew my father and Mel Priest.

The third email was received from Donna Allen, daughter of Bernie McLoughlin who had lived in Brisbane. Donna and I are arranging to meet here in Brisbane soon to swap stories and memories. I included a photo of Dad and Bernie in the March Q flight newsletter.

For inspiration for my first Q flight newsletter, Roland Orchard suggested I read the Canadian December 2022 newsletter, as it was Adam and Cate Wagstaffe's first. Then a short time later while going through more of my father's WWII records, I found a letter from Adam to my father dated Jan 1998. This was with regards to information my father might have about his uncle Michael Wagstaffe who died in a crash in 1944.

There must be two degrees of separation here, even after 25 years! On the 30<sup>th</sup> March I visited the Amberley Heritage Centre, a museum at the Amberley AirForce base just outside Brisbane. This is comprised of four hangers with 13 aircraft in addition to other displays. One display references eight RAAF bomber squadrons including 458 between 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 1941 to 14 Jan 1942. Total RAAF bomber command casualties were approximately 10,000 Australian airmen, the highest casualty rates in WWII; 3,539 killed in action and 610 killed in training accidents.

As we know the Wellington bomber was an incredible aircraft, so I was particularly interested in the Canberra Bomber which was on display. The RAAF used it between 1957 and 1982 and, for its time, was quite a fast aircraft with a maximum speed of 933kph for a maximum ferry range of 5,841km and a maximum load of 3,729kg. This particular aircraft on display, was then used from 1986 for another 20 years for firefighting training, after which it was restored for the museum.



While searching through the Australian War Memorial (AWM) records I found a group photograph of the 458 crew of K for Kitty taken after a raid in December 1941. The crew included, from left to right, Capt Sgt James Howard “Rupe” Holmes, second pilot Sgt Sven Ivanouw Hansen, Sgt Les Empson RAF front gunner, Sgt R.M. Croft rear gunner, Sgt N. H. Kobelke and Sgt K.A. Cousins RAF wireless operator.

Both pilots were from Brisbane, Croft from Adelaide and Kobelke from Sydney. If anyone has more information about the two Queenslanders I would like to know as the AWM has very little.

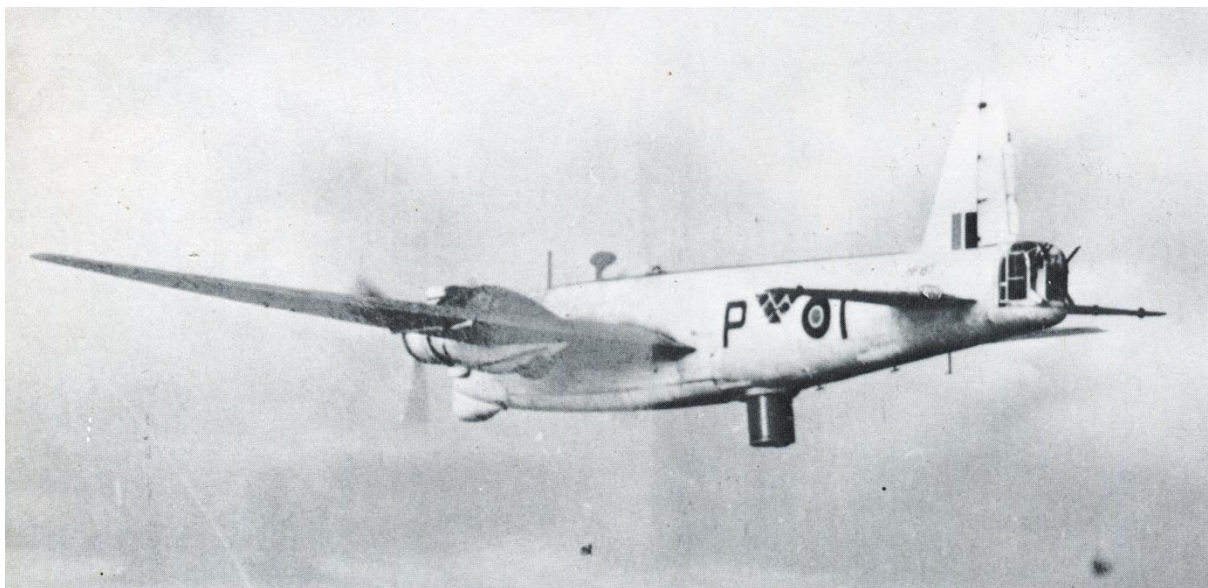


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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I watched the Anzac Day March here in Brisbane and noted 12 RAAF Associations marching. Of those only 3 and 462 represented squadrons with experience in the Middle East and only 466 used Wellingtons.

This reflects the stark figures that of the million odd Australians that served in WWII fewer than 4600 remained as of January 1st with an average age of 98 according to the Dept of Veteran Affairs. It means our and other associations are vital in keeping the memory alive. While based in Bone around November 1943, 458 squadron was provided with Wellington Mark XIV bombers fitted with Leigh Lights. These were search lights that deploy below the fuselage to help illuminate a submarine at night as seen below. I expect that once the search light was deployed it would have affected the aircrafts flying trim at exactly the time when the pilot wanted the best performance at submarine attacking height of around 50 feet above the sea.



Why the Wellingtons were painted white is a mystery to me as I assume they would be easier to be seen at night!

As an example of the complexities that come with new technology during WWII, I have attached below the instructions for 6 in the crew to operate the Leigh Light.





	2nd. Pilot	Navigator	W.O.P.	S.E. OPERATOR	REAR GUNNER
<b>CAPTAIN</b>					
Releases D.C.'s.					
Returns to instruments and climbs away, breaking to starboard if necessary		Returns to tables and prepares sighting report		Keeps look out for further contacts	Observes position of D.C. explosions directing light as necessary.
<b>ORDERS "LIGHT OUT"</b>	Switches off light and returns same to forward position.	Gives sighting report to W.O.P.	Sands sighting report	Keeps watch	Keeps watch for wreckage etc.
Returns to scene of attack flying up line of flame floats.	Examines surface of sea with light	Helps in examination of sea surface for wreckage.	"	"	"
Order "Turret up"	Checks bomb doors closed " Light facing forward	Moves to turret position	"	"	"
Continues on Patrol	Calls "POWER ON" (Depresses Shunt Valve).	Select "UP" Watches "CATCH LEVER" CALLS "TURRET GOING UP" When turret has risen and has been lowered onto catches by selecting "DOWN" CALLS "TURRET UP AND LOCKED" CALLS "ROTATION VALVE CLOSED" " "MASTER SWITCH SET TO 'OFF'."			



## Victoria Flight Report by Jeremy & Roland Orchard

You could not ask for a better day, 10 of us marched to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. Earlier some of us attended the 6am Dawn Service. One of the many highlights was again having Squadron Leader Matthew Wullemin, grandson of 458 Veteran: Warrant Officer Mervyn Lee leading our march. It was also fitting that 460 SQN was marching behind us as they were formed out of 458 SQN. Within the hour after completing our march, Victoria Flight President, Roland Orchard opened the meeting and called for a minute's silence in remembrance of recently passed Veterans, widows & members of 458 Squadron. He then recited the ode. *Lest we Forget*. Eleven of us attended the [Annual General Meeting](#) afterwards. The previous year in review is recorded in the minutes along with our plans for the coming year.



The meeting was called to discuss the coming year's focus and activities and to conduct the 2023 AGM. The meeting place was the same as 2022, just across the road (Birdwood Ave) from the Shrine. In attendance were Matthew Wullemin, John Boydell, Gill & Joe Somers and their granddaughters Hazel & Violet, Neil Flentje, Roland Orchard, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, friends John Marino & son, Thomas. Apologies were received from Howard & Sally Bertram, Sue



& Peter Jackson, Chris & Heather Wurr, Jane & Eric Foster. Those who marched were: Matthew Wuillemin, Neil Flentje, John Boydell, Roland Orchard, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, our sisters Pene and Edwina, John Marino & son, Thomas This year we had 5 Air Force Cadets displaying the picture of the Wellington and carrying our Banner; Nate CCPL and Jack CCPL of 417 SQN, Tyler LCDT of 416 SQN and Thomas LCDT and Archie CCPL of 408 SQN.



The Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Dawn Service, ANZAC Day 2023.  
Photo taken by Pene Compton.



## **ANZAC Day from Kangaroo Island with Chris and Heather Wurr**

Here I am at the 2023 Anzac Day service on the foreshore at Penneshaw on Kangaroo Island -- proudly supporting 458 Squadron!!!!



## New South Wales Flight Report by Stephen Bruce

A huge day in Sydney this ANZAC Day. Our group who marched including Jim Wardle's sons James and Simon resplendently dressed in their kilts. Hope you all had a memorable day in Melbourne.



Attendees as follows: Charles and Pat Baker, Gary and Lureen Kirkman, Ron Munkman, Beryl Dodds, Simon and James Wardle, Peter Bitmead, Wendy Whitem-Trunz, Stephen, Anita & Adam Bruce, Rob & Carolin Wilkinson. We were also joined by some members of 461 & 10 Squadron for our reunion at Castlereagh Boutique Hotel afterwards. An interesting day overall.





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

Mid-year lunch to be held at the Kensi Hotel on 6<sup>th</sup> July with 8 members attending. Hoping all members are coping with the winter weather.

## **458 Squadron 28-31 March 2025 Reunion**

**AVALON**  
**2025**  
AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW  
AEROSPACE AND DEFENCE EXPOSITION  
25-30 MARCH 2025

**INDUSTRY**  
25 - 28 MARCH 2025

**GENERAL PUBLIC**  
28 - 30 MARCH 2025

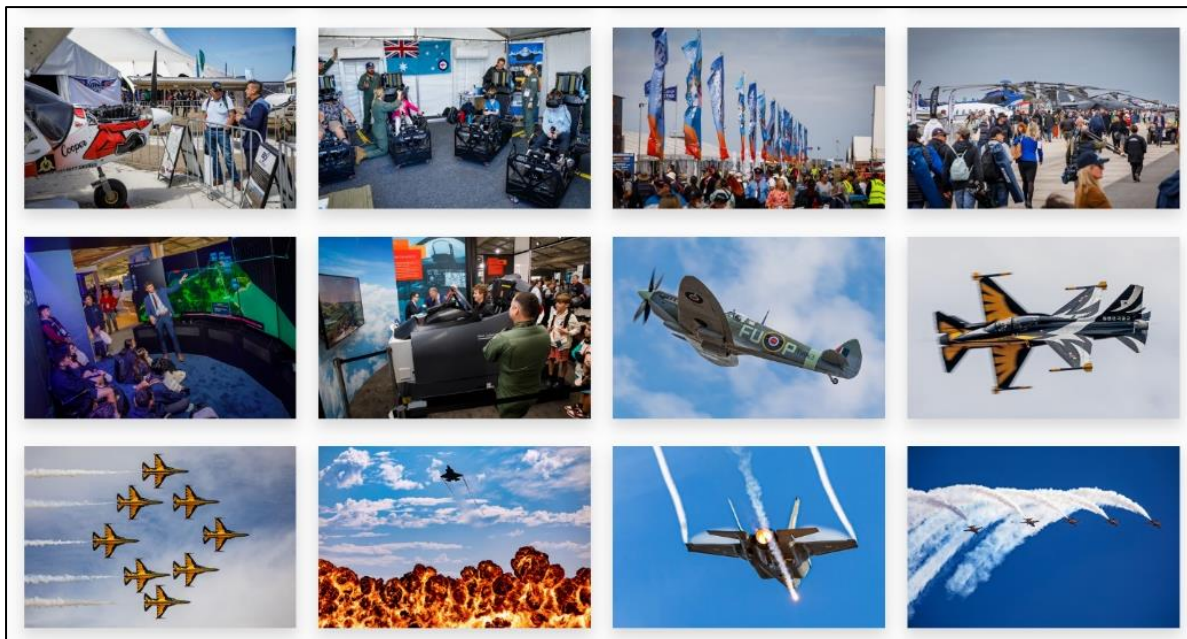
<https://www.airshow.com.au/airshow2025/index.asp>



I hope everyone received the email or letter about the proposed reunion to be held in Victoria at the International Air Show and the Point Cook RAAF Museum. It is not too late to reply so please send back the expression of interest as soon as possible. (thanks to those who have replied) At the risk of sounding like a broken record, it is important that we receive this expression of interest (EOI) as soon as possible as accommodation in Melbourne is at a premium at the time of the Air Show. The Air Show is truly an International event which attracts not only spectators but business people from around the world. The Air Show is a massive display for spectators, a trade show for Air Forces, the Aero Space and all types of aircraft industries from all corners of the globe. This is why we need to book accommodation so early. Please email your EOI to the editor. We hope as many members can make this spectacular event.

### **Replies by 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.**

Our goal is to get as many members to this reunion as we had at Williamstown in 2022, so come on and join us. It promises to be an event you will never forget!



## **DONATIONS.**

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 & 458 Squadron Association Website management by [\\*Potentweb](#)

## **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