

# A wing and a prayer

By Andrew Stackpool

THE service of 11 RAAF squadrons in WWII and the sacrifice of hundreds of their members will be remembered on March 26 at Saint Clement Danes Church (the RAF Chapel) in London when their squadron badges are dedicated.

The squadrons to be honoured are: (fighter) 3, 450, 451, 452, 454 and 457; (bomber) 462, 464 and 466; and (maritime) 458 and 459. SQNLDR Kylie Green from the Australian High Commission said the badges, which are hand-carved in slate, were installed in the floor of the church in late February.

They represent the end of a long project that stretches back more than five decades when the first badges were laid.

"Organising these last badges has taken approximately two years because they are all made by hand," SQNLDR Green said.

"However, it was important that we get them dedicated to the church while original members are still available to attend."

The badges join those of the

other Australian squadrons that flew in the European, Middle East and African theatres.

On completion of the dedication service, the squadrons of most Commonwealth countries that served alongside the RAF in those theatres during WWII will be represented in the floor of the church.

DCAF AVM Geoff Brown and Head of the Australian Defence Staff and Australian Defence Adviser to the UK, AIRCDRE Steve Martin, will represent the RAAF, while RAF CHAP Adrian Gattrill will conduct the service.

Also present will be the 20 RAAF personnel currently serving in the UK.

Squadron veterans or their family members from Australia and the UK will join them.

SQNLDR Green said they were anticipating up to 160 people based on the RSVPs they had received, but the figure could grow.

It includes at least 20 of the original squadron members.

"The response to the planned ceremony has been fantastic, with significantly more people making the journey from Australia than



**SLATED FOR GLORY:** 3SQN's hand-made slate badge, which, along with 10 other RAAF squadron badges, will be laid in the RAF Chapel. Photos: SQNLDR Kylie Green

I anticipated," SQNLDR Green said. "So we should have representatives attending from all of the squadrons.

"We have a large number of family members attending to represent their fathers who are unable to make the service.

"We also have several of the original squadron members able to make the trip for the ceremony. All of them are in their late 80s or early 90s so it is a great effort on their part.

"We also have several VIPs from the UK attending, includ-

ing the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, AVM Tim Anderson, and the former Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Michael Beetham, so the event is getting the recognition it deserves from the UK as well.

"And, of course, former RAAF members now living in the UK will also be attending," she said.

The dedication service will commence at 11am local time and will include a roll of honour in which the names of all veterans attending will be read out.

The service will be followed by refreshments in Australia House.

## Roll of honour

- Reformed in July 1940, 3SQN served in the Middle East and Italy. Disbanded in July 1946, it reformed in March 1956.
- Formed in February 1941, 450SQN served in the Middle East and disbanded in August 1945.
- Formed in February 1941, 451SQN served in the Middle East then in the UK from December 1944. It disbanded in January 1946.
- Formed in April 1941, 452SQN served in the Mediterranean until June 1942 when it returned to Australia to meet the Japanese threat. It disbanded in October 1945.
- Reformed in September 1942, 454SQN served in the Middle East. It disbanded in August 1945.
- Formed in June 1941, 457SQN served in the UK until September 1942 when it returned to Australia. It disbanded in November 1945.
- Formed in September 1942, 462SQN served in the Mediterranean and then in the UK from August 1944. It disbanded in September 1945 but reformed on September 25, 2005.
- Formed in September 1942, 464SQN served in the UK and disbanded in September 1945.
- Formed in October 1942, 466SQN served in the UK and disbanded in October 1945.
- Formed in July 1941, 458SQN served in the UK and then the Middle East from February 1942. It disbanded in June 1945.
- Formed in February 1942, 459SQN served in the Mediterranean and disbanded in April 1945.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### Air Force Band

**March 21:** The Low Brass Ensemble will perform at the Pakenham Annual Show at the Pakenham Race Course.

**March 23:** Air Power Brass will perform at Xavier College as part of the Xavier Brass Festival from 1pm.

**March 25:** The Ceremonial Band will support the 1RTU graduation parade at RAAF Base Wagga from 11am.

**March 26:** The Ceremonial Band will support the 2FTS pilots' graduation at RAAF Base Pearce from 10.30am.

**March 29:** The Ceremonial Band will lead the annual Weerama Procession at Werribee, Victoria, from 11am.

**March 31:** Catalina Wind Quintet will provide background music for the RAAF Association meeting at Saxon House, Ballarat.

**March 31:** The Ceremonial Band will support the RAAF birthday celebrations in Martin Place, Sydney, from 11am.

**March 31:** The Air Force Wind Quintet will perform as part of the RAAF anniversary celebrations at the Officers' Mess at RAAF Base Wagga.

**March 31:** Air Power Brass will support the RAAF anniversary commemoration service in Canberra from 11am.

### Anzac Legacy concert

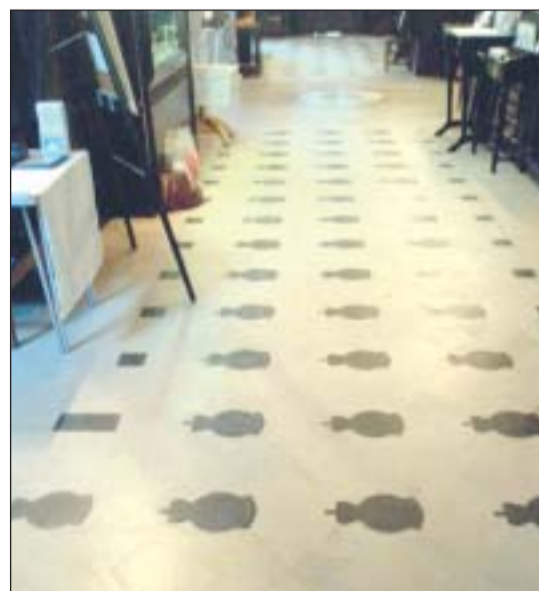
The annual Legacy Anzac concert will be held in Canberra on Sunday, April 5. As in previous years, hundreds of Legacy Widows from the ACT, Queanbeyan and surrounding areas will be special guests at the concert.

The Band of the Royal Military College will present the first half of the concert, with the second half featuring songs from the Rogers and Hammerstein musical South Pacific and Beach Boys tribute band, the Beach Brothers.

The concert will be held at the Royal Theatre, National Convention Centre, starting at 2pm. Tickets are now available through Ticketek on 6219 6666. Adults \$20, concessions \$10, and children \$5.

### Clarification

In the "Air Force phishing for answers in the US" story on page 16 of the February 19 edition, it said that SQNLDR Darren Jones belonged to the Aeronautical Operational Support Group. This should have read the Aerospace Operational Support Group.



**BADGES OF HONOUR:** Some of the existing squadron badges on the floor of the RAF Chapel (Saint Clement Danes Church) in London. The badges of the final 11 RAAF squadrons will be dedicated shortly.

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