



THE HON MATT KEOGH MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL

As descendants of those who served in the Royal Australian Air Force's No. 458 Squadron, the Prime Minister has asked me to share his best wishes and agrees you should be very proud of their service during the Second World War.

Today, I join with you in honouring the memory of all of those who served in No. 458 Squadron.

No. 458 was one of the earliest squadrons formed by Australia for service with the Royal Air Force (RAF) under the Empire Air Training Scheme agreement.

The Squadron was formed in July 1941 at Williamstown, New South Wales with hundreds of men from across the British Commonwealth serving until it was disbanded at Gibraltar in June 1945.

No. 458 Squadron forged a proud record of service initially with Bomber Command in Europe and then in the Mediterranean in the maritime patrol role.

Ground staff achieved a high level of aircraft serviceability while aircrews flew their Wellington bombers on hazardous convoy escort, anti-submarine, anti-shipping, and mine laying sorties, often flying in the deep of night.

Air Vice-Marshal Stevens, Air Officer Commanding Gibraltar, perhaps said it best when he declared that No. 458 had *'a record of which you may all be justly proud ... I have been most impressed by the keenness and discipline and determination which have characterised your every act.'*

It is wonderful that as relatives of those who served in No. 458 Squadron you have maintained this Association as a tribute to their memory.

I hope you enjoy your time together as you reminisce and reflect on the Squadron's remarkable record of service and sacrifice.

Those who served in the Squadron showed great courage and risked their lives to serve their countries in a time of great need.

We especially acknowledge the Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand men who lost their lives while serving with No. 458 Squadron.

We remember their sacrifice and that of their families.

This year the Association's reunion is particularly poignant as we mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten and their legacy endures.

Lest we forget.

HON MATT KEOGH MP
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