

TO:



454-459 SQUADRONS ASSOCIATION
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

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APRIL 2010 BULLETIN

COMBINED 454/459 SQUADRONS ASSOC. REUNION

SENDER:

*Mrs. Penny Griffiths
Honorary Secretary
454-459 Squadrons Association RAAF
C/- 53 Harold Street
Matraville NSW 2036
Australia*

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Leader: FLT John McKenzie

Assemble:

10.15 am Elizabeth Street – Banner and flag raised.
10.30 am Marchers form up. Surviving Vets in front rank.
Spacing normal – avoid gaps – divide at Cenotaph.
Disperse - Elizabeth Street.

Plea to family members of Vets – as you know our numbers are dwindling fast. When no more Vets can march, family members can still march with our Banner. We require 6 family members to carry the Banner. I'm sure no-one is going to stop anyone of you marching behind our banner. Also, we have 2 wheelchairs, if you need a chair I need to know a.s.a.p. Call me on the number listed in the letterhead.

Many thanks to all family members who pay their Subs and attend our Anzac Day Reunion, but I'm sure there must be a lot of you out there who don't come and commemorate this special day in memory of your fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles. It would be a shame if we had to disband the 454/459 Squadrons Assoc. because of lack of support from family members. Let's all rally to this occasion and **keep their memories alive!**

WE ARE ON THE MOVE AGAIN!

Unfortunately the CTA Club where we have held previous Reunions is now closing on Anzac Day, as it is not financially viable. Luckily enough, I have managed to get another venue at very short notice. Details of our new venue "The NSW Leagues Club" are on the following page. The location is advantageous as it is close to the March so our foot sore Vets can make their way to our Private Function Room on the 1st floor in no time. **We need at least 30 attendees and children are allowed** as it's a private booking.

There is adequate seating and bar facilities, and lunch will be hot/cold cocktail food, which provides great variety (8 choices) at \$22. I will need to let the Club know as soon as possible how many are coming.

So we hope to see you all at the March or the Luncheon. Please support us in this endeavour, if you don't want to/or can't make the March, please join us at our Luncheon to catch up with old mates, family and friends of deceased members.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE VENUE

- ➔ Register and obtain name tag and if applicable a food voucher – see next page ** at the Committee table.
- ➔ 12.45 pm – Toast absent friends, tributes, notices.
- ➔ 1.00 – 2.00 pm – Luncheon.
- ➔ 4.00 pm – Function concludes.

NSW LEAGUES CLUB

Level 1 Function Room
165 Phillip Street & 72 Elizabeth Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 9232 2611
Email: admin@nswleagues.com.au
Web : <http://www.nswleagues.com.au>

Transport Options

Railway

City Rail stations located close by at Martin Place and St James.
Easy walking distance to Town Hall & Wynyard.

Buses

Sydney Buses run along Elizabeth Street to Eastern Suburbs & Circular Quay and easy walking distance to George Street

Taxi Services

Taxi services are generally available on Elizabeth Street or Phillip Street - Taxi Phone available in the Phillip Street Foyer

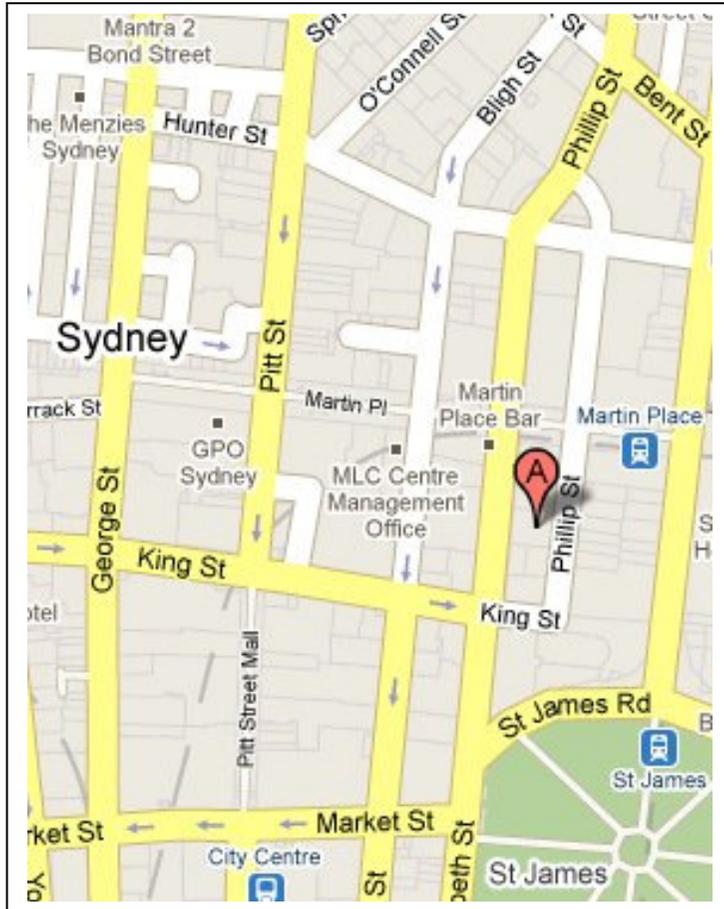
Parking & Rates

No onsite Club Parking Available however, located next door at 60 Elizabeth Street is the "Secure Parking Station".
Parking Rates: Sunday -- 0 - 1 Hour \$15.00 / 1 - 2 Hour \$25.00 / 2 + Hours \$30.00

[Location Map next page]

**** ALL MEMBERS, THEIR WIVES AND WIDOWS OF EX-PERSONNEL WILL BE PROVIDED WITH FREE MEALS AND FREE DRINKS THIS ANZAC DAY. Please see Penny to obtain tickets.**

LOCATION OF NSW LEAGUES CLUB [see Point 'A']



ABSENT COMRADES

It is with regret that we have been notified of the passing of the undermentioned members:

Date	Member	State	Sqdn	Advised by
Dec 2009	Ross Rasheed	SA	459	Our Secretary
01.12.2009	Harold "Blue" Munce	QLD	454	Daughter Margot
9.12.2009	Alan Coventry	VIC	459	

We say farewell to old friends and comrades, and extend our deepest sympathy to their families in their loss.

LEST WE FORGET

TRIBUTES

Flight Sergeant Alan COVENTRY – Navigator – RAAF 459 Squadron – Service No. 410 954

Alan Coventry signed up in Melbourne on 24 April 1942. Some of Alan's war experiences were recalled in "Desert Scorpions" by Prof. Leon Kane Maguire. "On one occasion in May 1944 he was involved in a mission tasked to cooperate with the royal Navy in an exercise with an ex-Italian submarine, a few miles out to sea from Haifa. Alan was the Navigator in one of the Venturas which carried a Naval



Officer observer, plus the crew of, Pilot Keith Titley, WOP/AGs – FSgts. Myer Blake and Robert Kidner. Alan later recalled that when the Ventura flashed its signal lamp to indicate they were about to attack, that he was located beside an open vent in the port side fuselage armed with a heavy camera and instructions to photograph the submarine as

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership fees remain the same @ AUD \$12.50 and we wish to thank overseas members for forwarding on cheques in Australian dollars.

we passed beside it at 50 feet. Thus recording its ability to dive or evade possible depth charges. Naturally, the centrifugal force flattened Coventry who finished up on his back with a heavy camera on his chest, seemingly weighing a ton. The Ventura would then resume height and station and await the submarine to surface and repeat the operation. For an hour and a half this exercise took place, greatly amusing the RN officer as he witnessed the sorry plight of Coventry. Operation completed, they flew across Lake Galilee submitting the naval *wallah to some very hairy low flying over the lake and then up the Jordon side wadis below ground level. Before long he asked to return to the base as he had a further appointment, but two hours later he was still on the unit very green about the gills whilst Coventry gingerly nursed his bruised chest.”
(*soldier/officer not normally at the front line)

**Warrant Officer Harold Edwin “Blue”
MUNCE – RAAF 454 Squadron –
Service No. 425873 – [21/5/42 to 14.9.1945]**



“Blue” Munce recalled for our website that the war began at Wireless School in Maryborough, QLD. He then moved off to San Francisco on US Matsonia, then to Taunton (Mass.) by train. Travelling on to New York, then Greenock, Scotland on the Queen Mary and south to Brighton, then back to Dumfries, Scotland. On to Port Said on the SS Sibajak (the troop ship from ‘hell’), then to Cairo, and other places till Squadron 454 Banghazi.

An incident remembered by “Blue” - and told by Kev O'Brien -

We were taking off from Benghazi one time in order to escort a convoy when a freak gust of violent wind blew us off the runway. We were heading for some buildings too fast to stop, so in a panic Ron retrated the wheels and we did a ground loop - slid on the belly of the aircraft in a circle till eventually stopping in a cloud of dust! Blue looked out the window and announced that we hadn't caught fire. I had seen too many of the aircraft that the pilots were

converting to from Avro Ansons that did burn on crashing and didn't feel too confident about our situation. There were three versions about what happened next.

1. That Blue wore the tread-marks of my flying boots up his back for the next few weeks - absolutely untrue!
2. That I courteously said "after you Blue" and waited for him to leave first - nearly true!
3. Blue's account. That I yelled "get out!" and threw him out the top hatch (our usual way out through the bottom hatch was deep in the sand of the desert). Probably nearly true! Blue was lost in admiration of my strength under terror and referred to me thereafter as "Mighty Mouse!"

“Blue” Munce always enjoyed the Anzac get-togethers with his good mates in Queensland, Kev O'Brien, Jim McGrath and their families. You'll find a photos featuring the 3 boys on his web page [our site], together with a few good memories he shared.

**Flight Lieutenant Ross RASHEED – RAAF – 459 Squadron
Service No. 407606 [11 Nov 1940 – 1 Aug 1945]**

Ross served with 459 from 7 July 1942 to August 1943. One of the first mentions of Ross in Prof. Kane Maguire's book “Desert Scorpions” is on page 49, where the Hudson flight FH296 was recalled by Ross. As the Wireless Operator in Col Barber's aircraft, the flight was fairly uneventful until they reached the North African coast west of Mersa Matruh – Egypt.

As they flew along the coast they could see a large number of vehicles going east, but assumed they were British. When they landed at Mersa Matruh, they had just come to a stop when Fred Dolly accidentally fired the turret machine guns. Surprised by this, Ross looked out from the astrodome and saw a jeep crammed with chaps racing out towards us.

They pulled alongside and shouted at us in a *guttural* voice, we thought for a moment that we had become POWs before our war had even started! Fortunately, they turned out to be South Africans and told us, “The enemy is only a few hours away, we will give you a bite to eat and refuel you – then you had better get away immediately”, which we did.

Post-war, Ross became a grazier, running sheep on a property near Port Augusta, South Australia for some 30 years. Retiring in 1976, he lived in the area near family grazing properties.

STORY

From the Obituary of - Flight Lieutenant James Kenneth “Joe” AITKEN, WAG No. 409366 – [459 Service - 1 Mar 44 to 6 Jan 45] - as published in The Age newspaper, May, 2009, written by Keith Dunstan.

Joe was Navigator/Observer and flew with Pilot Bob Norman, and WAGs Jack Simmonds and Bill East. Prof. Kane Maguire’s book “Desert Scorpions” relives many of the missions the crew were involved in during WW2. However, it is worthy and so interesting to hear more of the life of Joe Aitken. Apparently Joe was an author and expert lawyer in conveyancing, wills and estates of the deceased — and one of the last of the great gentlemen.

For decades Joe was a lecturer on these subjects at Melbourne University, and wrote several books on the drafting of Wills. Joe was the eldest of five children and the family lived in a large comfortable house in Heyington Place, Toorak. He was 10 years old, and brother Bob, 9, when off they went to Geelong College as boarders. Always modest and self-effacing, when asked how he went at Geelong, he said his studies were “reasonable” because he had a good memory. Reasonable was a piece of Aitken nonsense. He did so well he won a full scholarship to Ormond College, where he majored in English literature, philosophy and Latin. World War II came and he joined up. He had spent four years in the school cadets with no promotion. This cured him of ever wanting to go into the army, so in 1941 he joined the RAAF.

When Aitken returned to Australia as a Flight Lieutenant, his scholarship was still available at Ormond, but he didn’t continue with Philosophy. He was

surrounded by lawyers. His grandfather was a Barrister. His father, Phillip, was a Solicitor and partner in the firm Aitken, Walker and Strachan. His brothers Bob and Philip both became lawyers. So it was inevitable. He switched to the law. In the middle of his studies, Aitken’s sister, Virginia, introduced him to Sylvia James, and they were married at St John’s, Toorak, in August, 1947. The rent on their flat was four guineas a week, almost his entire income, so he made ends meet working part-time as a reporter on the now defunct *Argus*. It was exciting and he contemplated journalism as a career, but that was also not to be. “I wasn’t good enough,” he said. “I couldn’t do the foot-in-the-door stuff.” He graduated with a law degree (LLB) in 1948, and added a Masters (LLM) in 1949; Sylvia became a bachelor of science. In 1951, Aitken became a partner in the firm Russell Kennedy and Cook, and remained there until 1986. Joe did a refresher course in navigation at RMIT, and then he flew with his friend in a recreation of Francis Chichester’s flight from Norfolk Island to Lord Howe Island. They did this using old style instruments in the manner of Captain Cook, and like the noble captain they found their little island.

Aitken was a member at Royal Melbourne Golf Club, yet all his life he never owned a full set of clubs. It was more important to spend money on good books, and they had to be hardbacks. When his son Michael was born, Aitken was out on the course and the hospital could not contact him. He was winning the Spring Medal. Golfers will appreciate the importance of his comment: “I now have three sons but only one golf medal.”



Taken after the last operation, 26th January, 1945.

From left, Bob Norman, Jack Simmonds, Bill East and Joe Aitken. Both Jack and Joe passed away in 2009.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS RETURN SLIP NOW !

!!!!!!!!!!!!

**454 & 459 2009 ANZAC DAY REUNIONS
SUNDAY, 25TH APRIL 2010**

Member's Name:.....

Service No:..... Sqn:.....

Assoc. Name:Representing:.....Sqn:.....

Address:.....

Phone No.....Email:.....

Vets only to complete the following:

Attending Luncheon	YES	NO	Circle Response
Marching	YES	NO	
Attending March (wheelchair required)	YES	NO	
Attending March (transport required)	YES	NO	
To Ride with a carer	YES	NO	

If needed please bring your carer – relatives welcome.

*Our bulletin is late this time round due to the London Ceremony -if necessary please **contact Penny** by phone regarding attendance & requirements / WHEEL CHAIRS for Anzac Day. Please do forward on this Annual Sub Slip as per previous years. **Thank you***

Annual Sub	AUD \$12.50
Donation	\$
TOTAL:	\$

***Enclosed is my cheque or money order payable to:
454/459 Squadrons No.2 Account***

PLEASE RETURN THIS RESPONSE SLIP ASAP
whether or not you are attending on 25th April 2009
- or elsewhere.

*Penny Griffiths, Honorary Secretary,
53 Harold Street, Matraville, NSW, 2036, Australia*

