

TO:



454-459 SQUADRONS ASSOCIATION
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

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APRIL 2011 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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ANZAC DAY MARCH – MONDAY 25TH APRIL 2011

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 –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. Unfortunately this year we have no wheelchairs available.

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. Let's all rally to this occasion and **keep their memories alive!**

Our venue remains the same as last year "The NSW Leagues Club" details are once again 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 \$26. Can you please send your luncheon money (\$26) with the return slip or bring the exact money on the day. I need to let the Club know as soon as possible how many are coming. Thank you for this in advance.

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".

*** 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.*

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

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



ABSENT COMRADES

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

Date	Member	State	Sqdn	Advised by
16 06 2010	JF Watkin	VIC	454	His son Ken
10 09 2010	JW Shipway	NSW	454	Family
24 01 2011	B Rostron	UK	459	T. Martin's son
10 01 2011	GT Gaunt	NSW	459	His wife Thora
08 03 2011	EL Grimwade	NSW	454	His wife Muffy

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

LEST WE FORGET

TRIBUTES

Flying Officer John William 'Jack' (Shippy) Shipway Service No. 412722 – RAAF 454 Squadron – 20 7 41 – 11 1 46

Jack was in his 90th year and he will be greatly missed by the 454-459 Squadron's Association. Jack's contribution over the years has been greatly appreciated. We will miss his great sense of humour and company, especially on Anzac Day. In memory of Jack we thought it fitting to include again some of the great story he wrote some years ago about 454's last operational sortie in Italy in May 1945. He wrote:-

"It was in Jerusalem during 1944 when I first met Geoff Bradley and Peter Matthews, Cliff Kershaw and I were among a group of Air Force personnel who had been sent to the Middle East (instead of Bomber Command in the UK) and in the Mess on the first night Cliff introduced me to Geoff Bradley; we had a talk and the 3 of us decided we could work together, and as a result, the nucleus of the crew was formed; however, we required a navigator/bomb aimer to complete basic 4-man light bomber crew. Bradley piped up and said he had met a young Australian navigator who might blend in. A meeting was

arranged with the young bloke (Peter Matthews), resulting in the four of us agreeing to take our chances together.

A few days later we found ourselves in a road convoy on our way across the Sinai Desert to Egypt, pausing for the night at the lousy flea ridden transit camp of Port Taufiq opposite Suez. There was no sleep that night as the ferocious fleas fed on us poor mortals. Next day we were on our way to No. 75 OUT in the desert west of Cairo at a place called Gianaclis, which I remember as a place of hard clay pans and sand. It was to be our home until we became familiar with the Baltimore light bomber.

Our "sprog" crew did not see much of each other for the first couple of weeks as Bradley converted to this twin engined aircraft. Peter learned to fit himself into and work in the confined space of his "office" in the almost fully Perspex nose; Cliff and I found out all we could about the radio; the gun turret with its .50 cal twin guns and .30 cal loose mounted bottom guns; and the rest of the bits and pieces in our domain. Eventually we came together as a crew and finished the OUT course with pretty decent results.

Another Aussie crew was with us at this time comprising Bill Rawlinson (Pilot), Lou Stamper (Nav/Bomb Aimer), Frank Raynolds and Ray Riekie (Wireless/Air Gunners). Ray Riekie flew with us on the last trip Bradley's crew made, which was, (as far as 454 Squadron was aware) the last operational sorties by Desert Air Force.

Anyhow, off we went to war and eventually arrived at our posting, Squadron 454 located at Falconara, Italy (about 10 miles north of the Adriatic port of Ancona). It was a group of tents nestling on the camouflaged confines of an orchard with messes and quarters connected by duck boards. Mud squelched over the tops of our rubber boots if we happened to stray off the well marked tracks. Boy, what an experience! It had been raining heavily before we got there and continued to do so for some days.

We were checked off by various senior Squadron personnel who decided we were "no threat to the present company", so we were let loose on the enemy. Our first operational target with the Squadron was Pola and I remember the whole sizable mission as a bit of a "Schemozzle" as well as

“a hairy incident”. I remember Geoff Gillingham’s aircraft hurtling down when a piece of shrapnel took the canopy from over his head and his goggles were swept to the top of his head by the wind blast. His aircraft was making a good impression of a dive bomber as it hurtled down. He had to let the column go so that he could reach up and pull the goggles over his eyes. Meanwhile in our Baltimore the intercom became very quiet as Bradley exclaimed “....?x! we’re out of gas!”.

I don’t know what Peter did but Cliff was already down below with his parachute on his chest manfully gripping the pistol on his twin .30 calibre guns whilst I reached for the turret seat release ready to drop down, grab my chute, clamp it on and bail out when we heard “x?x!!! I knocked off the fuel switches!” So it was back to base at Falconara where the aircraft was parked in the mud that almost covered the front tyres and fully covered the tail wheel; and we in the back had to slither out of the aircraft through greasy mud. Oh to be on operational service with the RAAF in the RAF’s DAF.

It was not long before the Squadron was moved to a new airstrip on the coast of Cesenatico where there was no mud, only sand; and it was there we stayed until the end of the fighting in Italy – May 1945.”



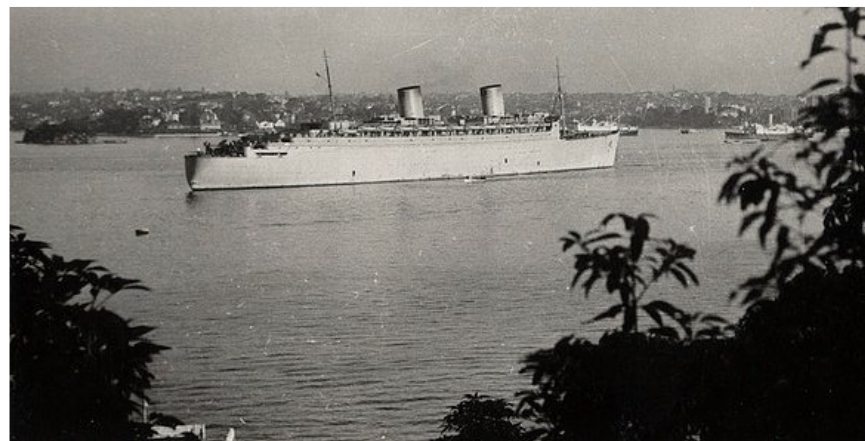
Jack on Anzac Day
2006 at the
Glenmore Hotel at
the Rocks, Sydney

Cpl Granville (Gunner) Thompson ‘Tom’ Gaunt, Service No. 32037 – RAAF 459 Squadron – Feb 1942 to Mar 1944

Tom Gaunt was born in Parklea, NSW and served on No. 38 Sqn RAF, then No. 203 Sqn RAF before joining 459 Squadron.

In the book *Desert Scorpions*, Cpl Cecil Browlee described the Indian Ocean passage to Egypt aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* which carried 6,000 AIF troops and 600 Airforce. I was on leave in Jerusalem when I hear about the attack on Pearl Harbour. The S/Ldr said “I have the very place for you – they are forming an Australian Squadron here” and pointed to a spot about a hundred miles west of el Alamein.

Cec Brownlee was on board the *Queen Elizaabeth* and many other Australian ground staff also joined the 459 Squadron in early 1942, including Leading Aircraftman Granville Gaunt, a Fitter IIE. They were to see a lot more of each other in the future. ‘Gunner’ Gaunt recalls “*Little did we know that it would be four years before any of us would see Australia again*”.



HMT Queen Elizabeth troop ship in Sydney Harbour

Post-war Tom Gaunt joined Qantas as an aircraft engineer and rose to become the Aircraft Servicing Manager. Retiring at 60, he purchased a property near Taree on the mid-north coast of NSW, raising cattle and Australian stock horses for seventeen years. He then moved and lived in Canberra from 1998.

**Flight Lieutenant Edward Langdon ‘Gerry’ Grimwade,
Service No. 407864 – RAAF 454 Squadron – 15 Oct 1942 to 12 Jan 1944**



Presentation of Painting - Australian War Memorial 1996

Back Row - L-R: Kevin Blanch -459, Sep Owen - 459, Peter Matthews - 454, Doug Hutchinson - 454 (flew with Sq/L Folkard Flight AG995 - first wave) , Tom Gaunt - 459, George Gray -454, Frank Cowan - 454, [Gerry Grimwade - 454 (last on right - back)]

Front Row - L-R: Bill Abbott - 454, Bob Andrews - 454, Max Coghlan - 454, Ray Rickie - 454 & Jack Stacey - 454

Squadron Leader David Milligan, who was the unit's Squadron Leader Flying, was posted to 454 to train crews in over-water operations and naval operation but would only remain for a short time. At HQ, he collected bundles of leaflets printed in German to be dropped by the unit over the island of Crete, now a fortified German garrison. The leaflets hailed the futility of further German resistance on the island, and in North Africa as a whole. They were intended as a prelude to a 'big show' planned for Crete

mid-year. If 454 had wanted to be a bombing unit, they could not have been more disappointed to find out that their first raid over enemy territory would be dropping paper, not high explosive.

The leaflets raids were still a dangerous activity. Flight Sergeant Gerry Grimwade who had met Milligan earlier was not on his crew for the raids and later recalled "We were caught twice in searchlights; what an experience, not only for me, but for the other crew members. It was David's first time also. Though he did not admit it, one was let to believe he wished it to happen as it was a learning experience"

FLIGHT CREW - FA 300 - FIRST WAVE - 23.7.1943

Squadron Leader L.H. Folkard, FAFVR
Warrant Officer F.R. Morgan, RAAF
Flight Sergeant R.N. Lawson, RNZAF
Flight Sergeant E.L. Grimwade, RAAF
Flight Sergeant W.T. Hayes, RNZAF

Gerry was also with one of the crews [FA300] that took part in the Crete Raid -- 23 July 1943 that would go down in the Unit's history as its darkest day. 3 Crews were lost on this raid.

In retrospect, there were a number of factors that led to failure. First, the planners at Group HQ had forgotten that although the Allies were on double summer time, the Axis were not. The plan assumed the German defences would be at breakfast and be caught unawares, but in Crete, breakfast was over and the Germans were already attending their daily duties.

Second, the 120 fighters that were sent as escort took some time to coordinate and so the Baltimores consequently arrived over the island first. This alerted the island defences, anti-aircraft guns and enemy fighters. While the Allied fighters were small and nimble and flying at much higher altitude, the bombers were not. The defences would have been fully prepared and awaiting the low-level strike with the inevitable result. Gerry's crew had logged three and three quarter hours for the sortie, was another of the lucky returnees. "We were a more experienced crew and didn't take undue chances" he later recalled.

Flight Lieutenant Bryan Rostron, RAF 459 Squadron

Our Association was saddened to hear of Bryan's death on the 24th January this year and we would like to acknowledge the huge contribution Bryan made as our UK Representative – he did an amazing job! Some of you will remember Bryan joining us for Anzac day in 1996 at the Glenmore Hotel – it was a great get together. Ten years later we had the pleasure of having his daughter Trish Cassidy join us at the 2006 Anzac Day luncheon at the Glenmore.

On our Association's website we have featured on Bryan's page the story he wrote about his wartime experiences called "One Man's War – My Story – 1939 – 1946". It is a great story and we would like to include an excerpt in this issue of our bulletin to honour his memory.

"On January 9th 1942 I took to the air for the first time in a Hudson and wasn't terribly impressed as all the training aircraft were ex-operational and should have been consigned to the scrap heap but I suppose the powers-that-be thought we might as well smash up old clapped-out aircraft and keep the new ones for the operational squadrons.

We flew in pairs, as the Hudson needed an extra pair of hands to fly it, mainly to operate the flaps and undercarriage, and I was joined by an Australian sergeant, Frank Livingstone. It was strange flying again, as I hadn't flown solo since 1st July but it soon came back and after five hours on Hudsons I went solo, much to my surprise as I didn't really have much of a clue, but it was a question of 'get on or get out' so I didn't have any option. Chuck Collins joined me as navigator of February 9th and I was wondering what to do about the rest of my crew when Lee Barrett and Jimmy Craig approached me in the Mess and asked if they could fly with me.

I said I would be delighted and we first took to the air as a crew on 18th February by which time I has amassed the grand total of fourteen hours on Hudsons. Over the next few months I didn't think about it again, but, one night, when we were in the desert with 459, sitting staring at the stars as the Mess had run out of beer, I asked Jimmy why they had asked to be crewed up with me and his reply surprised me - apparently they had spent all their spare time at the end of the runway watching the trainee pilots landing and decided that I looked one of the safest - I was flattered! The rest of the time at Silloth

was spent dodging the weather and the mountains - looking through my log book I see a lot of the exercises were curtailed due to bad weather although we did manage to complete a night cross country flight which entailed flying down the Irish Sea to the Kish lightvessel off Dublin, up to the Mull of Kintyre and back to Silloth. We felt very pleased with ourselves as our total night flying up to that time was three hours. The same night, Bill Bogg, who had been with me all the way from Babbacombe onwards, collided with another aircraft over the Solway Firth and both crews were killed. The visibility was very poor at the time and I don't think Bill had a chance. He was the first close friend to be killed and we were all very upset but, unfortunately, he was just the first of very many.

The next day we spent fifty minutes on a live bombing exercise and that was it - the course was over and we were officially a fully operational crew and off we went to join No. 500 (County of Kent) Squadron at Stornoway. When I think of it now it was unbelievable - I had a grand total of 51 hours on Hudsons and we had flown together as a crew for 37 hours. I suppose in mitigation for the RAF, they were very short of crews at that time and were pushing us through as quickly as possible in the hope that some would survive once we started operational flying. We thought we knew it all, or perhaps, hope springs eternal, but we must have been as green as grass and had no conception of what lay ahead which was probably just as well."

Bryan Rostron
with his 459
Scorpion plaque
[from the 1996-
97 Association
Bulletin]



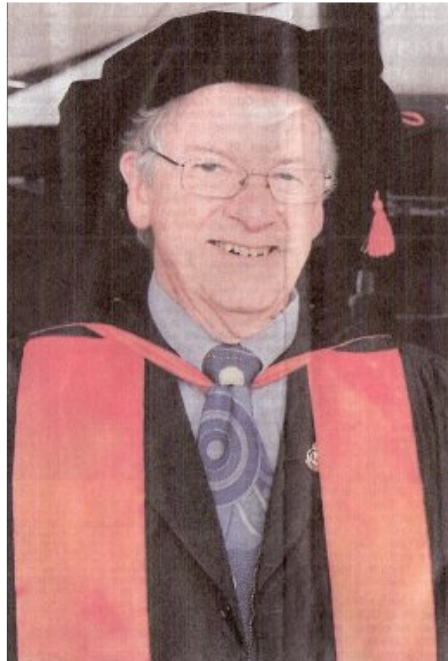
IN MEMORY OF LEON KANE-MAGUIRE

Professor Leon Kane-Maguire [author of Desert Scorpions – a History of 459 Squadron]] died earlier this year and he is survived by his wife Barbara and their children. Kane-Maguire was one of Australia's leading research scientists in the specialist field of conducting organic polymers and their properties. His work led to many international awards and the development of several new fields of science. His pioneering research in nano-materials was balanced by his down-to-earth wicked sense of humour. He was made an emeritus professor of the University of Wollongong when he retired last year, celebrating a lifelong commitment to science and education.

Leon and his twin brother Patrick were born on 4 May 1942. The boys were the sons of Noel Kane-Maguire who joined the RAAF 464 Squadron during WW2 and he was killed in action over the English Channel when the boys were only a year old. Leon maintained a strong association with the RAAF and an interest in war time aviation. This led to his lifelong quest to find his father and he and Air Commodore (Retd) Mark Lax co-authored "The Gestapo Hunters" the story of No. 464 Squadron (1999) and "To See the Dawn Again (462 Squadron) in 2009.

As we know Leon wrote "The Desert Scorpions" (459 Squadron) in 2007. In 2010, he was awarded first prize in the RAAF Heritage Awards for "Lost Without Trace" describing the service and loss of Squadron Leader Wilbur Wackett, the son of Australia's leading aircraft designer, Sir Lawrence Wackett. These books were in addition to the 183 academic publications he wrote. His parting gift to his family was a detailed history of his father's life, completed just days before he died.

Professor Leon Kane-Maguire 2010



A STORY SENT TO US FROM TOM "THE POM" HODGSON

LAC Thomas Hodgson WT – RAF -- Service Number 1247513 [RAAF 459]

"To those who it may concern, my name is Tom Hodgson, I was a founder member of 459 and joined them at Abasweir, (don't know if that is the correct spelling) but they only had two aircraft, early Lockheed Hudson's and there were about 15 Poms that joined the squadron that day. They were glad to meet us as we were all engine and airframe mechanics, bomb and gun armourers and had done our time in the UK on Hudson's.

As time went by, after about 3-6 months we got more aircraft and more Aussies joined the squadron and by this time we had a few German E boats to our credit which we had sunk in the Aegean sea. After a while we moved to a new LG (landing ground) at Gambut and we were there for some time as Rommel and Monty were having a go and the desert warfare carried on for some time.

It was in the heat of the summer and to have a shower would have been out of this world. I found four seven foot wooden poles which I sank into the ground to form a box three foot by three foot and covered the four poles with Hessian (sandbags) to form a cubicle. I put an empty ammunition box on top and filled it with water and a primus underneath to heat the water. An empty tobacco tin with holes punched in it did for the shower head with a tap to turn it off. The water lasted for ten minutes, enough for a shower. I used to charge a bottle of beer (Aussie pilsner lager) for a shower and had myself a good supply of beer. I had to treat the guy on the water bowser for keeping me supplied. Hope someone out there used my shower and would be glad to hear from you. When we moved later to Gianaclis I had to leave it all behind but it was fun while it lasted and kept me in beer for a while. I will tell you later about my Coolgardie safe to keep my beer cool.

So good luck all you ex 459'ers! Can't speak for 454 but hope you are all as well as I am.

Gday, Tom Hodgson, B Flight, 459."

ANNUAL BOMBER COMMAND COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY

Sunday 6 June 2010

Bomber Command Memorial, Sculpture Garden
Australian War Memorial

This Ceremony was held to remember and honour all those who served in bomber Command of the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the Second World War. Those in attendance were Ms Nola Anderson, Acting Director – Australian War Memorial; Air Commodore Geoff Michael AE OBE AFC (Ret'd) President of Honour Australian Flying Corps and RAAF Assoc.; Air Vice-Marshal Geoffrey Brown AM – Deputy chief of Air Force & Chaplain Murray Earl – Director General Chaplaincy Services RAAF.

Wreathlaying Ceremony



The laying of wreaths to recognise the sacrifice and service of all those who served in Bomber Command, at the

ANNUAL BOMBER COMMAND COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY



Sunday, 6 June 2010

Bomber Command Memorial, Sculpture Garden
Australian War Memorial

Bomber Command embraced an aircrew force of approximately 125,000. It included men not only from Great Britain the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, but also from other parts of the British Empire and from France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

One must not in any commemoration forget the men and women of the ground crews who serviced the planes, fed the crews, transported them, or worked in flying control, to name but a few of the vital support functions.

ROCK OF GIBRALTAR

During the formation of 459 Squadron in 1942 a number of Hudson aircraft and crews (mainly RAAF crews and composite RAF crews) were dispatched from the UK to complete the manning of the infant squadron. First touchdown en-route was Gibraltar and those people involved would retain a memory of it – albeit years ago.

Thanks to Doug Law (459) we have received an up-to-date impressive aerial photo of the Rock, reproduced below – great difference has taken place since those early days as you will see!



PLEASE COMPLETE THIS RETURN SLIP NOW

454 & 459 2011 ANZAC DAY REUNIONS

MONDAY, 25TH APRIL 2011

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

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	

If needed please bring your carer – relatives welcome.

*Unfortunately this year we are unable to provide any WHEEL CHAIRS for Anzac Day. Please do forward on this Annual Sub Slip as per previous years. **Thank you***

Annual Sub	AUD \$12.50
Anzac Luncheon	\$26.00
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 2011

*Penny Griffiths, Honorary Secretary,
53 Harold Street, Matraville, NSW, 2036, Australia
02 9661 7170*