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454-459 SQUADRONS ASSOCIATION ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

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YOUR 2015 COMMITTEE

Hon. Secretary – Steve Lysaght	Son of Jim Lysaght - 454
Treasurer – Michael Antonios	Son-in-law – Bill East - 459
Jill Lord	Daughter of George Gray - 454
Julie Parsons	Daughter of Jim McHale - 459
Pamela Antonios	Daughter of Bill East - 459
Jenny Huxley	Daughter of Bill East - 459
Penny Griffiths	Daughter of RegNossiter - 459

APRIL 2015 BULLETIN

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ANZAC DAY MARCH – SATURDAY, 25TH APRIL 2015

Leader: FLGOFF John ‘Doover’ MacMahon – RAAF 454 Squadron.

8.30 am **454-459 Vets to meet at Australia Square – on Pitt Street**
RAAF/RSL advice Pitt St., North of Hunter Street facing South
– Association member/s will be there to assist John MacMahon
– the banner will be raised. Divide at Cenotaph.
Unfortunately, Russ Carter will not be able to attend the march
or reunion this year. **(Do check the information on our website
and here is the link to the RAAF website with Map**
<http://www.raafansw.com/17754261?i=101066352>

IMPORTANT -- Veterans and a carer each only to form up.
Wording from the RAAF website as follows:

*“Most importantly, each Veteran who marches or uses a
wheelchair will ONLY be allowed one (1) carer to support and
assist them if, and as necessary.*

*Unfortunately, this Policy will be heavily enforced and
participants are implored to comply so that confrontation and
exclusion from this section of the March does not become
necessary.”*

‘Descendants’ who would like to march can as follows:-

11.30 am **Descendants of 454-459 Squadron members** - To form up 64-
68 Castlereagh Street – in front of the Bulgari Shop – March
time is around 12 midday. Banner will be raised for 454-459
Squadron marchers. Association members will be there to meet
you. Medals are to be worn on the right side of chest. Divide at
Cenotaph. Suggest hop on a train at St James for Central.
Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

We welcome supporters of Squadrons 454 & 459 who would like to join us at
the Anzac Day Reunion.

REUNION New Venue - “The Aurora Hotel”
Kippax Cocktail Lounge “reserved section”
Located on the **first floor** (lift access)

The Kippax Lounge will be open from 11.30 am – lunch from 12 – 3pm - it has a well stocked bar, great bistro-style restaurant and children are welcome. There is also an outdoor covered balcony available with seating for 60. The new location, whilst a little further than our previous Venue, provides excellent connections from the ending of the Anzac March. It is located across the road from Central Station.

As in previous years any 454-459 Veterans & their wives will have their meal and drinks provided at not cost – speak with Michael Antonios [Treasurer] on the day.

Due to the Descendants march ending later we are estimating that the Toast to absent friends, tributes and notices will be around 2.30 pm.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE AURORA HOTEL

- ➔ Attendees can arrive from 11.30 am
- ➔ Lunch 12-3 pm
- ➔ 2.30 pm – Toast absent friends, tributes, notices.
- ➔ With this Venue you can leave when you feel like it.



AURORA HOTEL

Level 1, Function Room [with lift access]
324 Elizabeth Street - Surry Hills, NSW 2010

[across the road from Central Station]

Email : aurora@thomashotels.com.au

Phone: 02 9211 3462

Web : <http://aurorahotel.com.au/bars/kippax-cocktail-lounge>

Transport Options

Railway

Trains run from St James to Central Railway Station

Buses

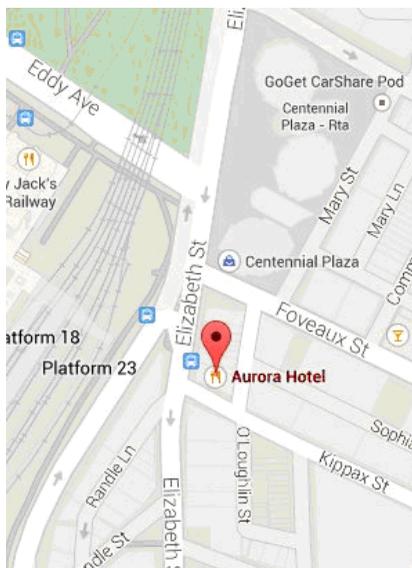
Sydney Buses run along Elizabeth Street Central Railway Station

Taxi Services --

Taxis are available out front regularly

Parking & Rates

It might be possible to park in Kippax Street or the alternative is 55 Holt Street Parking Station– flat rate on weekends @ \$12.00 or book before you secure a spot @ \$9.00”.



ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

To help us maintain the website, produce the annual Squadron Bulletin and arrange for the Anzac day gathering, a \$20 contribution can be made to the Association via:

- **PayPal subscriptions:** can be made by following this link <http://www.454-459squadrons.org.au/subscription.html>
- **Electronic transfer to:**
St.George Bank BSB: 112879
Account Number: 067706091
Description: Please make sure you enter *your name* in the “Description field”
- **Post to:**
Bank or personal cheque would be appreciated, made payable to “454 459 Squadrons No2 Account”
C/- The Treasurer, 454 459 Squadrons Association
14 Driscoll Place, Barden Ridge, NSW 2234, Australia
- **Please do not post Cash**



ABSENT COMRADES

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

Date	Member	State	Sqdn	Notified by
05.11.2014	Bob Andrews	NSW	454	Steve Lysaght
21.05.2014	Ken Rimmer	UK	454	Bill Noyce
17.05.2014	Tom Hodgson	UK	459	Bill Longhurst

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

LEST WE FORGET

TRIBUTES

**Warrant Officer Robert S. “Bob”
ANDREWS - WAG** – 454 Squadron
Service Number : 422369
Date of Enlistment 22 May 1942
Date of Discharge 15 February 1946
Born - 4 November 1923 -
Died 5 November 2014 – aged 91

Flight Crew

Jim Lysaght – Pilot
Bob Andrews – WAG
Doug McKee – Navigator
Stan Brown – Gunner

Plane

“Kuddlesome Kitty”

[Tribute provided by Steve Lysaght]



Bob Andrews was in the same tent as Jim Lysaght at initial training at Bradfield Park. After completing a Pilots course in Tiger Moths at Temora he then went to Point Cook for further training in twin engine airspeed Oxfords. Bob was scrubbed out just before his Wings test.

After joining an operational training unit at Shandur, near the Suez Canal, Bob once again met up with Jim Lysaght and was assigned to permanent crew on the American Baltimore on 454 Squadrons – a close support unit to the British 8th Army.

In 1966, wanting to avenge being scrubbed as a Pilot, Bob joined the Royal Aero Club at Bankstown where he gained his unrestricted Pilots Licence and night flying rating.

In 1983 Bob received the Federation Award and Medal of the Royal Federation of Aero Clubs. Some 60,000 people were introduced to aviation because of Bob Andrews!

In 1985 Bob was grounded due to ill health and began a hobby of building and flying radio-controlled model aircraft. Some of these had nine feet wing spans.

There was nothing Bob Andrews could not do! He built and sailed his own boats. He built a weekender on a site only accessible by water and built all the furniture in it.

Bob was a staunch family man having met his beloved Nancy when he was just 14.

Our condolences to Nancy and to his children and grandchildren.

Bob Andrews was a good man and will be remembered and missed by all that knew him.



Aircraft FW839:K 'Kuddlesome Kitty' gets a refuel prior to a sortie.

Godfrey Collection

LAC Kenneth “Ken” RIMMER– Electrician – RAFVR

Electricians Number : 1510447 – service 1942-1945 – died 21st May 14



*Electrical Section, Berka III
- March 1944. Rear: Ron A.
Herbee (RAF), Bob Harrison
(RAF), Max Truscott (RAAF),
Smith (RAF), Van Haim (RAF),
Middle: Hank Hayes (RAF), Geo
Mann (RAF), Jack Unsworth
(RAAF), Brian Ball (RAAF),
Ken Rimmer (RAF), Front:
'Barney' Brooker (RAAF),
Chas Barnes (RAF), Joe Hunter
(RAF), Bobby Lamonby (RAF).
Rimmer Collection*

As a tribute to Ken we would like to publish some of his own memoirs that tell a compelling story of day to day life for those belonging to the 454 Squadron.

“Life at Falconara [on the Adriatic coast of Italy] was particularly grim. To those who have never worked in it, the mud was unbelievable. Tents which served as living quarters, sick quarters, stores and operations rooms were surrounded by it. Not just ordinary mud but often semi-liquid ooze 18" deep.

On the drome, the unduly comparatively mud-less area was the metal landing strip. Aircraft were parked in thick clinging mud which covered ground crews as they crawled around their mud-spattered Baltimores, trying in a world of mud, to keep the oily grime from the vital parts of their beloved planes and they did it. The Armourers worked like muddy beavers bombing up 12 aircraft twice a day. Bombs of 250 lb. had to be rolled for distances up to 150 yards through this oozing soil and then, caked with slippery stuff, had to be manhandled onto the aircraft. In spite of all this never once was an aircraft late on a raid because of late arming by ground crews.

Much of the credit for this goes to W/D (Lofty) Naylor (RAF) and the spirit with which they did it. In November W/Cdr. Henderson replaced W/Cdr. Moore as C/O of 454.

By December the Army had advanced almost to Ravenna and two weeks before Christmas 1944 the Squadron moved north again to Cesenatico between Rimini and Ravenna. At this time 253 Wing, comprised of 454 (RAAF), 15 (SAAF), and 500 (RAF) Squadrons, was the most forward bomber wing in the Italian theatre 15 miles north, gunfire was heard, barrages were felt through the trembling ground and at night the sky was lit as the Hun strived vainly to retake Ravenna with his heavy guns and Panzer divisions. Operations here, in addition to close-support work extended to long range targets, Cervignano, Castigliano and Castel Franco Veneto all receiving unwelcome attention.

After the mud of Falconara, Cesenatico was paradise. The first layer of sandy, grass covered soil was frozen so there was not even dust to worry the men. Light snow fell occasionally and though the weather was undoubtedly cold, each tent had a home heater, and at least clothing could be kept dry. Flying at high altitudes at this time, extremely cold temperatures were experienced, the coldest being 40F below freezing. Aircraft heaters were petrol driven and considered dangerous when operating in the same area as flak so were seldom used.

Operations ceased in January whilst a conversion was made to night intruder work. For six weeks crews who had been flying formation in daylight at 12,000 ft had to change over to flying singly at night at all heights from deck level to 6,000ft. In this type of work a great deal of scope was given to crews. They chose their own targets within limits and flew at the height they favoured and strafed and bombed as they wished.”

LAC Thomas “Tom the Pom” Hodgson– WT – RAF – 459 Squadron
Service Number : 1247513 – service 1942-1945 – Died 17th May 14



Unlike the aircrew who were largely Australian, the majority of 459 Squadron ground staff were from RAF drafts, such as Tom Hodgson. Tom was born in London 27 November 1922, and signed up in February 1942. An engine flight mechanic, he had enlisted in May 1941 at age seventeen. He received 22 weeks of flight mechanics training at the Squires Gate Technical training Centre in Blackpool. Tom indicated in “Desert Scorpions” by Leon Kane-Maguire, “starting on four-cylinder Gipsy Moth engines and moving up through Bristol Mercury radials to Rolls Royce Merlins. This was followed by several weeks on aerodrome procedures – how to picket down and service aircraft on an airfield, and learning starting procedures on the likes of Hawker Harts and a Whitley bomber (which seemed a monster to us). The course was completed with prop swinging on Tiger Moths and Hawker Furies – the dire penalty for making a mistake (apart from the possibility of losing an arm) being required to carry a very large boulder around the perimeter of the airfield.”

Graduating as an Aircraftman Grade 2 (AC2) flight mechanic, Tom was briefly posted to No. 608 Squadron (RAF) in Yorkshire before being shipped to the Middle East where he became one of the first ground crew to join No. 459 Squadron.

Of greater long-term impact on Squadron morale was the acquisition of a piano thanks to the “Comforts Fund”. Cec Brownlee recalled “I was giving the piano a workout when somebody said ‘mind if I join you?’. It was Matt Trelour, who had recently joined 459, he was holding a clarinet, so away we went together...Sheet music was very scarce but it mattered not, as one of us only had to start a number and the other would follow. Shortly after meeting Matt, we were having a ‘jam session’, when an RAF bod approached us and said he had a drum kit – the origin of which remained a mystery – but he rigged his kit and away we went.

This ‘RAF bod’ was Leading Aircraftman Tom Hodgson and the group was soon joined by another RAF ground-staffer, ‘Tich’ (or ‘Shorty’) Bean who played the trumpet. Thus was born the 459 Concert Party, later to become known as the ‘Hudsonnaires’. The sound of the band soon drew audiences from Sergeants’ and Officers’ Messes – enjoying the entertainment and the band’s motto of “You say it and we’ll play it”. One of the best memories is of MO ‘Doc’ Fowles attempting to sing “The Good Ship Venus” and being belted over the head with a drumstick by Padre Bob Davies, Bob explained later he was not offended by the words, he was hitting the Doc because he was singing out of tune.

In a further move to strengthen Squadron morale at Gambut a new officers’ mess was erected complete with stage, dressing room, orchestra pit, bring your own kerosene can. Tom provided details of the handiwork involved. ‘The Squadron carpenter ‘Chippy’ Farmer did all the woodwork himself, while the stage walls and roof were of a canvas from ERIP tents. We dug holes in which we placed square four-gallon drums filled with sand to support the stage. Two of the electricians designed the microphones and speakers and rigged the stage lights, powered by twelve-volt batteries.

After the war Tom was a driving instructor for several years before becoming a chauffeur with the Ministry of Transport. He drove members to and from the House of Lords for a number of years before being given responsibility for maintaining the fleet of cars. He later became a head mechanic with Ford before retiring in 1984.



Phil Howson, Temporary Squadron CO
(Feb-Apr 1942) and CO (Sep 1942-Oct 1943).

**Wing Commander Phillip
Walter 'Phil' Howson, OBE,
RAAF 459 Sqdn**

We have received news that the late Phil Howson's son – also Phil, will be travelling to Sydney for the Anzac Day March and Reunion. We are delighted that he might be able to say a few words at the luncheon about his father's wartime experiences.

Note from the Hon. Secretary" – Steve Lysaght

We are trying to ensure we have the up to date information for any of the descendants of the 454 459 Squadrons.

*If you have access to the Internet, please go to our website
<http://www.454-459squadrons.org.au/registration.html>
and let us know your Email and to which member of the 454 459 Squadrons
you are related.*

This information will help us keep descendent updated on the Association's activities, and in the future help descendants trace their genealogy.

>In compiling this bulletin the 454-459 Squadrons Association are would like to express our gratitude for being able to research the late Professor Leon Kane-Maguire's book "Desert Scorpions - A History of 459 Squadron 1942-1945" & Mark Lax's book "Alamein to the Alps" – 454 Squadron RAAF 1941-1945<