

NEILL, Kenneth John (407800 RAAF)



Image 1 ©State Library of South Australia 2009
State Library of South Australia, catalogue
numbers PRG-325-18-1 and PRG-325-18-2.

Name	NEILL, Kenneth John Flight Lieutenant RAAF
Service Number	407800
Date of Birth	1st August 1916
Died	13th July 1943
Place of Birth	Adelaide SA
Resident	Victor Harbor SA
Cemetery	Malta Memorial, Valletta Malta

Kenneth John Neill was born in Adelaide on 1 August 1916. He was the eldest of three children of Arnold Neill and Effie May Neill (nee Frost). The family home was situated in Gameau Road, Campbelltown. Kenneth was employed as a bank clerk at the Victor Harbor branch of the Savings Bank of South Australia at the time of his enrolment in the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve on 5 July 1940. He was called up for full time service six months later on 6 January 1941. He had “*Enlisted for duration of the war, and a period of up to twelve months*”, on his enrolment application.

Kenneth’s first unit was No 4 Initial Training School (ITS) at Victor Harbor. Based in the Mount Breckan estate, this training unit was exclusively for those recruits that were eligible for air cadet training. If a recruit successfully completed the ten-week intensive course, he would be mustered either for training as a pilot, air observer (later designated as a navigator) or wireless operator & air gunner. Kenneth successfully completed his training in late-February 1941 and was mustered for pilot training with a posting to No 1 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) on 6 March 1941. For reasons not specifically stated, he was sent back to No 1 ITS for nine days (21 April – 30 April) where he was re-classified for air observer training (navigator) at No 2 Air Observers School (AOS), Mount Gambier. He successfully completed this course and was assigned for further training at No 2 Bomber and Gunnery School (BAGS), Port Pirie. Upon completion, Kenneth was posted to No 2 Air Navigation School (ANS), Nhill. On 20 September 1941, Kenneth was awarded his Air Observer’s Badge.

On 15 October 1941, Kenneth took his eight days pre-embarkation leave. The day he reported to No 4 Embarkation Depot (ED) on 23 October, he was commissioned as a Pilot Officer. By 8 November 1941, he was at the RAF’s 103rd Maintenance Unit at RAF Station Aboukir, which was situated about 11 kilometres east of Alexandria, Egypt. His next posting in June 1942 was to the 209th RAF Squadron based out of Mombasa, Kenya.

Equipped with Catalinas, the Squadron flew patrols over the Indian Ocean, with detached bases in South Africa, Madagascar, Oman and the Seychelles to extend its cover. His service file records he flew only two sorties with them. His first war flight in the Catalina, was on 5 July, and the last flight was on the 20 July 1942.

On 24 August, Kenneth was posted 117th RAF Squadron at Bilbeis, Egypt. The Squadron had been re-equipped with Lockheed Hudsons in November 1941. During this time, he was promoted to Flying Officer on 23 April 1942. He remained at Bilbeis for two weeks prior to a posting to the RAAF's 458 Squadron at Shallufa. The Squadron had detachments at Gambut, Berca and finally to Malta. Equipped with Vickers Wellington MK III's, the Squadron undertook maritime patrols, convoy escorts and mine laying operations. On the 22 April 1943, Kenneth was promoted to the rank of Acting Flight Lieutenant.

In mid-1943 the Squadron was responsible for sinking many ships, including an Italian cruiser and a destroyer. In June 1943, the Squadron deployed to Tunisia. On Monday, 12 July 1943 at 2045 hours, Wellington MP 629 took off from RAF Protville (Tunisia) to carry out an armed search for shipping in the Corsica-North Sardinian area. Aboard the aircraft were eight crewmen – six RCAF(Royal Canadian Air Force), two RAF and one RAAF, Kenneth was the sole Australian. The aircraft sent a sighting report at approximately 23:20 hours but nothing was heard after that and the aircraft failed to return. Kenneth was less than a month away from celebrating his 27th birthday.

Enquiries post-war and interrogation of local inhabitants, the Missing Research and Enquiry Unit reported that the aircraft was shot down and crashed in the sea between Palau and La Maddalena on 13 July 1943. Palau is on the north east coast of Sardinia and La Maddalena is a small island off the coast, approximately three miles north of Palau. All crew are commemorated at the Malta Memorial in Valletta Malta. On the tall monument that towers over the memorial a plaque reads.

“OVER THESE AND NEIGHBOURING LANDS AND SEAS THE AIRMEN WHOSE NAMES ARE RECORDED HERE FELL IN RAID OR SORTIE AND HAVE NO KNOWN GRAVE MALTA GIBRALTAR MEDITERRANEAN ADRIATIC TUNISIA SICILY ITALY YUGOSLAVIA AUSTRIA PROPOSITI INSULA TENAX TENACES VIROS COMMEMORAT”

Kenneth is also commemorated on the Victor Harbor War Memorial located within the Soldiers Memorial Gardens on Flinders Parade, along the foreshore in Victor Harbor.

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Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team, March 2010. Updated by T.Young & M.Young 20/02/2026

Appendix



Image 2 © Colin Cameron 2025
Malta Memorial



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

MALTA0879C

Image 3 © awm.gov.au 2026



Image 4 © Adam Cooper 2010
Malta Memorial



Image 5 © 458raafsquadron.org 2025
458 RAAF Squadron Protville, Tunisia



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

MEC2658

Image 6 © awm.gov.au 2025
Vickers Wellington painted used over Italy in 1943. Type of plane that
Kenneth flew.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

MEC0638

Image 7 © awm.gov.au 2025
SQN 458 working on a Vickers Wellington in Tunisia June 1943

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COUPON No.	COMMENCEMENT DATE	VALIDITY EXPIRES
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C 1, 2, 3, and 4	June 7th	August 28th
C 5, 6, 7, and 8	July 5th	September 25th
C 9, 10, 11, and 12	August 2nd	October 23rd
SUGAR		
D 3 and 4	July 5th	End of Rationing Year
D 5 and 6	August 2nd	
D 7 and 8	August 30th	
BUTTER		
E 5 and 6	July 5th	July 17th
E 7 and 8	July 19th	July 31st
E 9 and 10	August 2nd	August 14th
E 11 and 12	August 16th	August 28th

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CHARITABLE DANCES COMMITTEE.

Reviewing its activities since its inception, the local patriotic dance committee discussed at length and dealt extensively with matters concerning the future administration of its affairs, at a meeting held on Monday night last. Appointed by the town council, under whose direction and control the body operates, the committee consists of Messrs. S. D. Bruce (chairman), A. L. Sedunary, R. G. Miller, G. A. Bond and K. A. Pearsons (secretary). These men were appointed for the purpose of conducting dances for the enjoyment of members of the R.A.A.F. and assisting patriotic, charitable, and other worthy organisations. Since its appointment on November 1st, 1941, until July 3rd, '43, the committee has disbursed the amount of £1,857/9/9, and many congratulatory and appreciative letters have been received from bodies who have received assistance as a result of these dances.

Progressive statements and balance sheets have been audited and placed before the corporation for its perusal. The council has the authority at any time to terminate the tenure of the committee.

It has been decided to discontinue the Wednesday night dance until further notice, owing to numerous counter attractions, coupled with the fact that some of the guest homes are now in recess.

Applications may be made for Saturday night engagements or assistance from the secretary.

FOOTBALL TOMORROW.

The first football match to be played at Victor Harbour this season will take place on the oval tomorrow, commencing at 2.30 p.m., between teams representing the R.A.A.F. and Victor.

The following teams have been selected:—

R.A.A.F.—King (capt.), Dodds (vice-capt.), Furse, Browning, Inkle, Nelson, Gawling, Becker, Beatty, Skinner, Waller, Harkin, Williams, Hawkins, Bray, Wynne, Longmire, Stewart, Reserves, Johns and Hoare.
Victor Harbour—G. Morrison, D. Bartel, E. Surfield, W. Williams, L. Pearce, J. Sutton, D. Brown, N. Bruce, D. Wylie, K. Pitman, R. Ewen, G. Rumbelow, Pedder, D. Gregory, R. Yates, N. Johnson, G. Ridge, P. Tugwell, C. Broadbent, F. Rowlands, Rogerson. The eighteen will be selected from the above, and any player unavailable is asked to notify one of the committee as soon as possible.

LAWRENCE—JENKINS WEDDING.

The Goodwood Methodist Church was prettily decorated by the mothers of the bride and bridegroom for the wedding of Winifred Alexandra, elder daughter of Captain and Mrs. W. W. Jenkins, of Victor Harbour, and Pte. Harry Roger (AIF returned), youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Lawrence, of Cobera.

The bride, who entered the church to the strains of the "Wedding March," with her mother, looked attractive in a blue street frock with black accessories and carried a posy of white mixed flowers.

The bride was attended by Miss Ruth Lawrence (sister of the bridegroom) in dusky pink. The bridegroom was attended by Mr. Des. Brooks, of Goodwood. The mother of the bride wore a navy and white two-piece suit and the mother of the bridegroom was dressed in navy blue. The Rev. W. F. H. Brasher was the officiating minister. A small reception was held at the home of the bridegroom's grandmother, Mrs. W. Cook, of Goodwood. Owing to the bride's father being on active service with the AIF, her mother gave her away.

2842 FROM RED CROSS DRIVE.

Miss Stella Kirby Queen for 1943.

After two months of strenuous campaigning, the 1943 Red Cross Queen Competition, conducted by the Victor Harbour Circle Social Committee, was brought to a successful conclusion with a ball in the Town Hall on Wednesday night last, when there was a very large attendance of both dancers and onlookers. Music was provided by a local orchestra.

During the evening the seventeen candidates in the queen competition were introduced to the large assembly by Mr. R. A. Miller. They were Misses Norma Kirby, Stella Kirby, Betty Elix, Elva Henderson, Laurel Sutton, Patricia Spicer, Joyce Wallace, Phyllis Shipway, Judy Bruce, Carys Pearce, Gwenneth Haese, Colleen Pearsons, Helen Roberts, Gwen Grosvenor, Lexie Ireland, Joan Roads, Helen Reid.

Mr. Miller then asked the mayor (Mr. S. D. Bruce) to draw the winning name from a box in which they had been placed, and amid rounds of applause, Miss Stella Kirby's name was withdrawn and that young lady was acclaimed Victor Harbour's Red Cross Queen for 1943. Mr. Bruce congratulated the committee on the success of the appeal, and said that the committee was fortunate in having Mrs. Graham Shipway as president. The organisers, Mrs. E. L. Rumbelow and Mrs. A. M. Pearce, had displayed wonderful organising ability and the success of the competition was in no small way due to their untiring efforts.

In making a presentation to each of the contestants, Mrs. Shipway thanked everybody for the wonderful help rendered, particularly the parents of the girls for allowing them to take part. The winning queen was crowned by Mrs. Shipway, little Jennifer Goldsack assisting in the ceremony.

The bulk of the money raised was derived from a popular photo competition for local boys in the fighting services, conducted by the queen contestants. This realised £695 and was won by Sgt.-Pilot Alan Sedunary, R.A.A.F., whose nomination was sponsored by Misses Helen Reid and Carys Pearce.

The voting was as follows:—

Name	No. Votes	Amount
Alan Sedunary	35,603	140 0 3
Harold Elix	29,995	124 19 7
Gordon Pearsons	24,237	100 19 9
Gordon Jenke	21,129	88 0 9
Jack Martin	18,894	78 14 6
Maurice Roads	17,068	71 1 3
Peter Matthews	14,001	58 6 9
Jack Grosvenor	8,022	33 8 6
Total	167,936	695 11 4

It is the intention of the committee to send each boy a cake as a memento of the competition.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

The many friends of Mr. J. J. Davoren will sympathise with him at the tragic death of his brother, Mr. Andrew P. Davoren, station-master, which occurred on Tuesday last at Parooka when he was crushed between two sheep vans during shunting operations.

In memory of Private D. F. Sweetman, of Karoonda (formerly of this district), who was killed at El Alamein twelve months ago, a tree is to be planted on a site almost opposite the Lower Inman Hall. The simple ceremony will be performed on Friday, 30th July, at 3 p.m. by Col. H. M. Parsons, and children from nearby schools will attend; it will be of a public nature. The Sweetman family are amongst the oldest settlers in the southern portion of this State.

Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Neill, of Gambeau Road, Campbelltown, have been advised that their son, Flying-Officer Kenneth J. Neill, has been reported missing as the result of air operations on July 12-13. F. O. Neill enlisted in the R.A.A.F. from Victor Harbour in July, 1940, and left for the Middle-East in October, 1941. He also served in Malta. Prior to enlistment, he was employed at the local branch of the Savings Bank.

The annual meeting of the Mothers' and Babies' Association is to be held in the Mayor's Parlour, Victor Harbour, on Tuesday, 10th August, at 3 p.m. Nominations for various offices close with the hon. secretary, Mrs. Wilson, on 3rd August.

Mrs. W. D. Walker (International Secretary) will be the speaker at the annual meeting of the Country Women's Association on Tuesday next at the Masonic Hall at 2.30 p.m.

SOUTH COAST HOSPITAL.

The thirteenth annual meeting of the Women's Auxiliary was held in the Town Hall on Tuesday afternoon, July 13th, and there was a large attendance of members.

A very successful year's work was reported.

Annual collections are made from the members of eggs, jam, old linen, and Christmas cheer, and all the sewing and mending is done for the hospital.

The following officers were again elected:—President, Mrs. M. Jagger; vice-presidents, Mrs. H. M. Parsons and Miss E. Goodwin; secretary and treasurer, Mrs. H. L. Smith; committee, Mrs. H. E. Welch, Matron Tuck, Mrs. E. A. Sowerby, Mrs. E. Welch, and Mrs. W. L. Williams; auditor, Miss M. A. Jagger.

"There must be no letting up at the end of this war. You will have to go on in the same spirit after the war to win the peace."—Mr. Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister of Great Britain.

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321

DEFECTIVE ORIGINAL

64008

MAR 12 1948

xx 130

Casualty Section,
Albert Park Barracks

xxx S.C.3.

RAAF 166/29/32(46A)

166/29/32
R.A.A.F.

Dear Sir,

I refer to previous communications concerning your late son, Flight Lieutenant Kenneth John Neill, and now advise that a report has been received from the Missing, Research and Enquiry Service operating in the Mediterranean area.

The report, which is based on the records of municipal authorities and interrogation of local inhabitants at La Maddalena, states that your son's aircraft was shot down and crashed into the sea between Palau and La Maddalena on the 13th July, 1943. Palau is situated on the north east coast of Sardinia and La Maddalena is a small island off the coast approximately three miles north of Palau.

The report adds, that the body of one member of the crew namely Sergeant Crocker of the Royal Air Force, was washed ashore several days after the crash and buried in the La Maddalena Cemetery. All efforts to establish whether the bodies of your son and his six other comrades were ever recovered have proved unsuccessful. It is concluded therefore, that they were lost at sea.

It is proposed to commemorate your son by including his name on a memorial which will be erected at a later date by the Imperial War Graves Commission, to the memory of those deceased members who have no known grave. Details concerning the location and form of this memorial have yet to be decided by the Commission.

Permit me to assure you once again of the sincere sympathy of this Department in your great loss.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. A. Neill,
Gameau Road,
CAMPBELLTOWN. S.A.

M.C. Langslow
(M.C. Langslow)
SECRETARY.
Louis 8348

C. J. Maguire
5/3/48

Encl 9A

No. 458 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

Royal Air Force.

British North African Forces.

14th July 1945.

Dear *Mr Neill*,

Before you receive this letter, you will have received advice from the Air Ministry that your Son, Aus.407800, Acting Flight Lieutenant Kenneth John Neill, Royal Australian Air Force, failed to return from operations on the night of the 12th/13th July 1945.

The aircraft in which he was in was last heard of over the target area and it is feared that it was shot down due to enemy action.

It may be some consolation for you to know that your son had played and was playing a big part in the invasion of Sicily which now looks like being a complete success.

I offer to you my very sincere sympathy.

Yours *sincerely*
B.R. McKenzie

(B.R. McKenzie)
Lieutenant Colonel. S.A.A.F.
Officer Commanding.
No. 458 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

Mr A. Neill.
Gameau Road.
Campbelltown. South Australia.
A U S T R A L I A.

PERSONAL EFFECTS OF AUS/407800 A/F/LT. K.J. NEILL.

Encl 29 B

- 1 Steel trunk damaged
- 1 Suit case damaged contg;
- 1 Dressing gown & girdle
- 2 Prs. Officers blue trousers
- 2 Officers blue jackets with C&E Braid 1 O.B.'s Badge
- 2 Prs. K.D. Trousers
- 1 K.D. Jacket with O.B.'s badge.
- 1 K.D. Sudan jacket with O.B.'s badge
- 2 Prs. White trousers
- 1 Pr. Leather gloves
- 1 White Pullover
- 2 Blue sweaters
- 1 Blue pullover
- 1 Pr. Football boots
- 2 Prs. K.D. Shorts
- 4 Blue shirts
- 3 Suits Pyjamas
- 2 Face towels
- 1 Housewife
- 3 Singlets
- 2 Prs. Drawers
- 3 Wool Scarves
- 1 Pr. Suspenders
- 27 Only socks
- 2 Prs. K.D. Stockings
- 1 Pr. White socks
- 1 Pr. Mittens
- 1 Pr. White shorts
- 4 Blue collars
- 1 Pr. Braces
- 1 K.D. Shirt
- 2 Black ties
- 1 Leather money belt
- 1 Cranwell front
- 1-Balaclava
- 1 Leather strap 1 Group photo 1 Map 1 guide book.

Image 11 © naa.gov.au 2026
Kenneth's personal effects

166/29/32
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Eve 4 SA
AIR MAIL.

Telephone: 9211
HOLTS

Telegraphic address:
"AUSTRALIA, WESTCENT, LONDON."
ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO
"THE AIR OFFICER COMMANDING."

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE,
OVERSEAS HEADQUARTERS, 166/29/32
KODAK HOUSE,
63, KINGSWAY, A.F.

L401/4152/P.4.

00203

LONDON, W.C.2

12 Jan 48.

The Secretary,
Air Board,
Victoria Barracks,
St. Kilda Road,
Melbourne,
Victoria, AUSTRALIA.

Flying Officer K.J. NEILL Aus/407800.

Forwarded herewith are copies of reports from
5 M.R.E.U. dated 24 Apr and 24 Jul 47.

2. This case is now considered closed on the
assumption that Flying Officer Neill was Lost at Sea.
The ~~unrecovered~~ bodies recovered from the sea are being regis-
tered as 'Unknowns'.

*Pillas) 27
1/48*

*Notes
@
27/6/47*

D. A. Wright
(D. A. WRIGHT)
Squadron Leader,
for Air Commodore,
Air Officer Commanding.

Image 12 © naa.gov.au 2026
Flying Officer K J Neill Missing in Action officially
closed, notification of death at sea. Page 1 Of 3

Enc 13E

Headquarters,
Missing Research and Enquiry Service,
Q/- A.P.O. S.442.
Royal Air Force,
Central Med. Forces.

24th April, 1947.

Air Ministry (S.7. Cas)
2, Seville Street,
Knightsbridge, S.W.1.

Copies to Royal Canadian Air Force, H.Q.
Ottawa, Canada.

R.A.A.F. Overseas Headquarters,
Kodak House,
Kingsway,
London, W.C.2.

CAN	J.	10642	F/O	HALLSTONE,	W.O.
		1192315	Sgt.	CROCKER,	F.O.
CAN	J.	12745	F/O	DEGINS,	J.A.
	R.	87392	Sgt.	WRIGHT,	W.W.
	R.	119675	Sgt.	BEADLEY,	H.E.
	R.	98941	F/Lt.	MACONKEY,	D.H.
AUS.		407800	F/Lt.	NEILL,	K.J.
		1334816	Sgt.	TINDALL,	J.

WELLINGTON M.P. 629.

AUS.	J.	403677	F/Sgt.	NICKALLS,	W.
		1344057	Sgt.	MCGARRY,	J.P.
		1217083	Sgt.	BENNETT,	G.H.
		1266937	Sgt.	HAYWOOD,	E.J.
		1388690	Sgt.	SMITH,	G.A.

WELLINGTON A.Z. 174.

J.	9691	F/O	LAWSON,	G.A.
AUS.	401507	F/O	HAZELDINE,	L.T.
J.	11225	F/O	TARRISON,	M.H.
J.	11125	F/O	PAGAN,	A.R.
J.	11132	F/O	BOCHHELL,	E.A.
	124347	Sgt.	BIRKOWS,	E.S.
J.	13982	F/O	BENTON,	A.

WELLINGTON M.P. 631.

Wellington M.P. 629, and crew took off from Protville Aerodrome at 20.45 hours on 12.7.43, to carry out an armed search of Corsica and Northern Sardinia. A sighting report was received from this aircraft at 23.30 hours and nothing more was seen or heard of it after this.

2. Wellington A.Z. 174 and crew took off at 20.42 hrs. on 2nd July 1943, to attack Olbia, Sardinia, and failed to return. Nothing further is known regarding this crew.

3. Wellington M.P. 631, and crew were airborne at 21.00 hours on 14th July, 1943 from Protville, to carry out an armed search in the area N.E. Sardinia. The aircraft sent out a message at approx. 02.16

/2...

National Archives of Australia NAA: A705.166/29/32

Enc 13B

No.5. Missing Research and Enquiry Unit,
Q/- A.P.O. S.565,
Royal Air Force,
British Troops in Austria.

24th July, 1947.

Can.	J.	10642	F/O	HALLSTONE	W.O.
		1192315	Sgt.	CROCKER	F.O.
Can.	J.	12745	F/O	DEGINS	J.A.
	R.	87392	Sgt.	WRIGHT	W.W.
	R.	119675	Sgt.	BEADLEY	H.E.
	R.	98941	Sgt.	MACONKEY	D.H.
Aus.		407800	F/Lt.	NEILL	K.J.
		1334816	Sgt.	TINDALL	J.

Wellington M.P. 629.

A.	403677	F/Sgt.	NICKALLS,	W.
	1344057	Sgt.	MCGARRY,	J.P.
	1217083	Sgt.	BENNETT,	G.H.
	1266937	Sgt.	HAYWOOD,	E.J.
	1388690	Sgt.	SMITH,	G.A.

Wellington A.Z. 174.

J.	9691	F/O	LAWSON,	G.A.
Aus.	401507	F/O	HAZELDINE,	L.T.
J.	11225	F/O	TARRISON,	M.H.
J.	11125	F/O	PAGAN,	A.R.
J.	11132	F/O	BOCHHELL,	E.A.
	124347	Sgt.	BIRKOWS,	E.S.
J.	13982	F/O	BENTON,	A.

Wellington M.P. 631.

Further to our letter of even reference dated 24th April, 1947.

2. Air Ministry authority was given, in their P.406592/43/S.11.Cas.0.6. dated the 18th June, 1947, for the closing of the case in respect of Wellington M.P. 631 and crew on the assumption that they were lost at sea.

3. In view of the facts given in our above mentioned letter this action will not be taken until we are in receipt of Air Ministry's instructions on the three cases.

(sgd) D. MILLER Capt.
For Wing Commander Commanding,
No.5. M.R.E.U., R.A.F., B.T.A.

National Archives of Australia NAA: A705.166/29/32

Image 13 & 14 © naa.gov.au 2026
Report of Flying Officer K J Neill Missing in Action officially closed, notification of death at sea. Pages 2 and 3



Image 15 & 16 © awm.au 2026
Location of Memorial plaque at the Australian War Memorial Canberra and date of Roll of Honor Projection

Roll of Honour name projection

Kenneth John Neill's name will be projected onto the exterior of the Hall of Memory on:

- Friday, 6 March 2026 at 5:19 am

- Monday, 1 June 2026 at 5:44 am

- Tuesday, 4 August 2026 at 1:27 am

- Sunday, 11 October 2026 at 4:56 am