



UNITS OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

A CONCISE HISTORY



VOLUME 9

ANCILLARY UNITS

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UNITS OF THE ROYAL
AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
A CONCISE HISTORY

VOLUME 9
ANCILLARY UNITS

Compiled by the RAAF Historical Section

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INTRODUCTION

In November 1992 it was proposed that, as part of the RAAF 75th Anniversary celebrations to be held in 1996, a complete history of each unit of the RAAF should be prepared. The concept was to produce a concise history of each unit which would also serve as a basic reference for further research, and the realisation of that concept has resulted in a unique work. Other air forces have produced a history of all operational units, but no other air force has attempted to give a concise history of every unit which was an integral part of its organisation. An early decision was to produce 10 'generic' volumes, each pertinent to a given function of the Royal Australian Air Force. Every effort has been made to remain true to this concept, although it is conceded that some arbitrary decisions have been made as to which volume a unit would best fit into.

After much discussion, a standard format was established for each volume and requests circulated for volunteers to research and write the histories. Each history was to be based on the relevant Unit History Record and every care taken to ensure factual accuracy within a strict word limit. Only information up to November 1994 was to be included.

Over 110 volunteers, drawn from within the Service, ex-service organisations and interested civilians, forwarded pieces to the RAAF Historical Section, which undertook the collation of the manuscripts, final checking and liaison with the publishers. Except for editing for consistency of style the histories remain largely as they were written.

Volume 9, Ancillary Units, is designed to acknowledge the role and functions of units which could not be categorised in one or other of the functional areas. They are of no less importance, and many units had, or have, a proud record of service. The inclusion of so many units which perform such different functions demonstrates, as no other volume in this collection, the breadth and variety of RAAF activity. The expertise of the Airfield Construction Squadrons was essential for flying units to advance in the Pacific; 201 Flight explored the (then) technological frontiers of aerial electronic surveillance; and the humanitarian efforts of medical staff are valued by all members of the RAAF.

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1 AIR TRIALS UNIT

Alatjitu



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 17 January 1955 | —ARDU Trial Flight re-named Air Trials Unit |
| 31 March 1958 | —Air Trials Unit Detachment 'A' disbanded |
| April 1958 | —numbered '1' Air Trials Unit |
| 30 September 1967 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU) Trials Flight at Woomera, South Australia, was re-named Air Trials Unit on 17 January 1955, and ARDU Trials Flight Detachment, Edinburgh, re-named Rear Echelon, Air Trials Unit. The Unit was numbered '1' Air Trials Unit in April 1958.

During its period of operation, 1 Air Trials Unit operated diverse aircraft types, such as Lincoln, Meteor, Canberra, Jindivik, Sycamore, Mustang, Beaufighter, Winjeel and Beaver. Bristol Freighters were used for liaison duties between Edinburgh and Woomera, the two sites from which the Unit operated. In 1960 an Otter aircraft supplanted the Beaver and, during April 1964, the first Alouette helicopter was received to supplement the Sycamore. In addition, a Royal Air Force Washington (B-29) and Valiant bombers, as well as Royal Navy Sea Vixen aircraft, were based with the Unit for trials at Woomera during the period of the Unit's operations.

Up until 1958, 1 Air Trials Unit activities centred around testing the British 'Red Shoes', 'Fire Flash', 'Red Duster', 'Blue Sky' and 'Blue Jay'

missile systems. In April 1957 the Unit recorded involvement with the Royal Navy 'Sea Slug' program and in November telemetry trials were being undertaken on pilotless Meteor and Canberra target aircraft.

During 1958 ejection seat trials were undertaken from both Canberra and Valiant aircraft, and this coincided with the United Kingdom's push into the missile field with the advent of the 'Long Tom', 'Skylark' and 'Black Knight' rocket programs. 1 Air Trials Unit flew recovery sorties in support of these projects, as well as being involved with 'Red Top', 'Bloodhound II', 'Thunderbolt' and 'Matra' trials.

During the period of operations there was only one fatal aircraft accident—Flight Lieutenant R. Frayne was killed when his Meteor crashed on take-off from Mallala, South Australia, on 16 September 1955. The only other manned aircraft loss was that of a Sycamore helicopter, which crashed from 700 feet near Evetts Field, Woomera, on 13 December 1960. The pilot, Wing Commander Inger, and his passenger, Leading Aircraftman Hoey, suffered only minor injuries. Tom Lester, a de Havilland employee, died as a result of injuries resulting from a 'Blue Jay' being accidentally triggered in a hangar on 19 April 1956. Flight Sergeant J.E. More escaped hurt in an unusual incident whilst night flying in a Winjeel on 18 August 1957—as he came in to land the aircraft struck a kangaroo, tearing off the starboard flap.

The Unit was involved with the maintaining and operation of target drones and their use for trials in weapons tests. Many of the flying duties involved the recovery of missiles and drones from the range—not always an easy task. On 3 April 1957 ground control lost a Jindivik, which was last seen 'heading roughly west'. Searches were made on six separate days by Lincoln, Meteor and Dakota aircraft in an attempt to find the errant aircraft; on 15 April it was discovered by Mr McKay at Mulbooma Homestead and the wreckage recovered by Flying Officer B.J. Avis.

There were variations to the flying routine. On 25 January 1957, Squadron Leader H.W.C. Thwaites and crew flew a Lincoln to Giles, Western Australia, to undertake a survey of the Gibson Desert. An advance party had been flown to Giles by Bristol Freighter on the previous day, but the Lincoln had to fly via Alice Springs due to the nuclear testing being undertaken at Maralinga. Next day, the Lincoln flew a low level survey of the desert, covering 800 nautical miles.

During 10 December 1957 Flying Officer Collins and Pilot Officer Jackson searched the Mount Elba-Coober Pedy-Kingoonya road for the missing Bowman family, whose murdered bodies and car were finally

discovered on the 13th. Although the Unit did not discover the vehicle, its Bristol Freighter was used to transport the Bowman car from Mount Isa to Adelaide for the investigation. Later, on 23 March 1963, members of the South Australian Police were flown to Coober Pedy to investigate opal thefts, resulting in the apprehension of the perpetrator.

From 8 to 15 May 1963 a detachment supported Sir Malcolm Campbell's land speed record attempt with *Bluebird* on Lake Eyre. During June 1967, the combined RAAF and RAF operations were being phased out. The local technical management and responsibility of the Target Aircraft Squadron was taken over by Short Brothers and Harland, and the squadron disbanded on 30 June 1967. The remainder of the Unit was disbanded on 30 September 1967.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

17 January 1955	—Wing Commander F.R. Schaaf
8 January 1956	—Wing Commander L.H. Williamson
14 January 1958	—Wing Commander D.D. McCord
10 February 1960	—Wing Commander F.J. Inger
March 1962	—Wing Commander J.M. Sutherland
31 December 1964	—Wing Commander L.M. Bird

2 AIR TRIALS UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 31 March 1958 —formed at RAAF Base Edinburgh, SA
- 1 June 1965 —amalgamated with Maintenance Squadron
RAAF Edinburgh
- 27 February 1970 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

2 Air Trials Unit—formerly Detachment 'A', Air Trials Unit, Woomera—was formed at RAAF Edinburgh as the emphasis on air trials shifted to Edinburgh and difficulties arising from administering a detachment 350 miles from its parent unit became apparent. Commanded by Squadron Leader M.O. Carr, 2 Air Trials Unit flew Canberra, Sabre, Valiant and Meteor (NFII, T7 and Mk 4) as well as Dakota and Bristol Freighter aircraft. The latter were used on courier duties with Woomera and Maralinga.

Varied trials were undertaken during the life of the Unit, including bomb ballistics, the Folland Ejection Seat, Ikara, telemetry and a multitude of technical trials in support of various missile and aircraft programs. The importance of trial work may be seen by the flying statistics for February 1964—23.55 hours were flown on trials work, 46.05 hours on range ferry tasks and 54.00 hours on flying training. One of the more interesting duties was involvement with US Project 'Mercury', the manned space program. During February 1961 checks were made of Mercury equipment installed at Woomera and calibration flights made to support the facility at Muchea, Western Australia. On 21 September Lieutenant Commander Scott Carpenter, one of the seven Mercury astronauts, was flown to Woomera to see the tracking installations there and, on 27 January 1962, Squadron Leader Harvey flew urgently required spares from Muchea to the tracking facility at Red Lake. In April 1962 a Dakota was fitted out with equipment for use in the program and flew 38 hours and 15 minutes during March 1962 in support of the project.

Another international project which involved support from 2 Air Trials Unit was the British 'Blue Streak' program. From 13 May to 3 June 1964, a Dakota flew 92 hours from the remote Swindells Field, surveying

impact area of the 'Blue Streak', which was due to be launched on 25 May 1964.

Two fatal aircraft accidents marred the history of 2 Air Trials Unit. On 21 October 1958, Pilot Officer A.J.C. Bierman was killed when his Meteor T7 crashed at Couchs Hill, east of the airfield at Edinburgh. On 31 July 1961 a Dakota flown by Flying Officer W.J. Bowden, which had been involved in Project 'Mercury' trials at Muchea, crashed just after take-off into a hill near Pearce, Western Australia. The crew of the aircraft were killed and only three of the passengers survived.

Extra tasks undertaken included search and rescue, medical evacuation and special transport flights. On 27 July 1958 a Bristol Freighter was flown from Darwin to Amberley, tasked with the delivery of an engine for an RAF Hastings transport, and another Bristol Freighter transported Ikara from the Government Aircraft Factory in Victoria to Woomera.

One of the more interesting activities undertaken by 2 Air Trials Unit flying personnel occurred on 26 March 1962 when Flight Lieutenants Turner and Morton crewed a Canberra target aircraft during its ferry flight from Belfast, Ireland, taking the Belfast-Lyneham-Idris-Khartoum-Aden-Karachi-Delhi-Calcutta-Butterworth-Changi-Darwin-Edinburgh route.

Maintenance Squadron Edinburgh and 2 Air Trials Unit amalgamated on 1 June 1965, with the latter retaining its own title and under the temporary command of Squadron Leader H.V. Shearn, AFC. The organisation remained the same until the Unit's aircraft were handed over to Base Squadron Edinburgh for use by the Weapons Research Establishment on 28 January 1970. 2 Air Trials Unit was officially disbanded on 27 February 1970.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

31 March 1958	—Squadron Leader M.O. Carr
29 April 1958	—Wing Commander S.W. Dallywater
12 September 1961	—Wing Commander D.A. Glen
5 November 1963	—Wing Commander J.G. Cornish
29 June 1965	—Wing Commander K.G. Brinsley
23 October 1967	—Wing Commander G.A. Ross
11 July 1969	—Squadron Leader S.N. Todhunter

1 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

CHRONOLOGY

6 April 1942	—1 Mobile Works Squadron formed at Ascot Vale, Vic.
20 April 1942	—moved to Flemington, Vic.
6 July 1942	—moved to Pine Creek, NT
22 July 1942	—Special Works Force created and later moved to Port Moresby
20 July 1944	—unit re-named 1 Airfield Construction Squadron
22 January 1945	—departed for Morotai
27 April 1945	—departed Morotai for Tarakan
30 November 1945	—Squadron disbanded

NARRATIVE

On 6 April 1942 1 Mobile Works Squadron (1MWS) was formed at Ascot Vale, Victoria, with 13 officers and 518 other ranks commanded by Squadron Leader D.J. Rooney. After re-locating to Flemington Racecourse to collect equipment, they moved on 19 June by convoy to Pine Creek, in North-Western Area. The Squadron completed the move by the first week in July and began construction of the Advanced Air Headquarters at Coomalie Creek, setting up sawmills and crushing plants to allow local materials to be used. Additional work was begun at Fenton Airfield and Hughes Airfield and a detachment was sent north to carry out a wet weather program at Noonamah.

Late in August the Squadron moved to Coomalie Creek, where quarters had previously been constructed. Once settled in, the unit began to build the facilities for 1 Medical Receiving Station. During the months of September and October, work was commenced on airstrips at Fenton, Berrimah, Strauss, Hughes, Livingstone, Millingimbi and Batchelor.

Squadron Leader F.A.I. Law assumed command of the Squadron during February 1943 and routine work continued until late July, when members of 1MWS were posted to form the basis for 14 Mobile Works Squadron. During August, the remaining personnel were posted south

on leave, and the Squadron was reformed at Wooloomanata during early October. The unit moved to Ascot Vale in preparation for a return to North-Western Area, under the command of Flight Lieutenant M.I. Chesterfield, and continued work on the Fenton and Long airstrips.

During February 1944, the Squadron headquarters and the majority of the unit moved to Darwin, with a detachment being sent to the Anjo Peninsula.

The unit was re-named 1 Airfield Construction Squadron on 20 July 1944.

The Squadron, now commanded by Squadron Leader J.F. Keays, moved south to Randwick where it assisted with works at Mascot and Marangaroo. On 22 January 1945, the unit left Sydney for Morotai, arriving on 11 February. It remained until the end of May and deployed to Tarakan, where it was employed until 30 November, when it was disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

6 April 1942	—Squadron Leader D.J. Rooney
3 February 1943	—Squadron Leader F.A. Maw
9 October 1943	—Flight Lieutenant M.I. Chesterfield
24 August 1944	—Squadron Leader J.F. Keays

2 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

Construendo Crescit Patria
(The Commonwealth Grows Through Building)



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 10 June 1942 | —formed as 2 Mobile Works Squadron at Pearce, WA |
| 14 January 1943 | —arrived Wards Strip, Port Moresby |
| 2 December 1943 | —departed for Lae |
| 15 July 1944 | —re-named 2 Airfield Construction Squadron |
| 1 May 1944 | —arrived at Ransford, Vic. |
| 18 April 1945 | —arrived at Morotai Island |
| 7 July 1945 | —embarked for Balikpapan |
| 4 December 1945 | —Squadron disbanded in the field |
| 19 April 1947 | —reformed at Mallala, SA |
| 6 July 1950 | —headquarters located at Pimba |
| 23 January 1952 | —arrived Cocos Islands |
| 7 November 1952 | —arrived Momote, Papua New Guinea |
| 10 August 1955 | —moved to Butterworth, Malaysia |
| 1 August 1958 | —moved to East Sale, Vic. |
| 28 April 1961 | —Squadron disbanded |

NARRATIVE

2 Airfield Construction Squadron was originally formed as 2 Mobile Works Squadron at Pearce, Western Australia, on 10 June 1942. The unit was tasked with constructing landing grounds and encampments. To

gain experience, the Squadron was located at Dunreath under the control of the Allied Works Council during October 1942. Although initially intended to operate in the north-west of Australia, the Squadron found itself encamped at Yeerongpilly, Queensland, awaiting transport to New Guinea.

On 14 January 1943 the unit arrived in Port Moresby and camped at Konedobu. Two days later it moved to a site less than a mile from Wards Strip, and began the first of many construction tasks. By December the unit had built roads, dispersal areas, ordnance storage areas, taxiways, a flying boat slipway, a convalescent depot at Sogeri and a RAAF hospital at Konedobu, in addition to works required on the landing strip itself.

The Squadron moved by sea to the north of New Guinea on 2 December 1943 and until late May 1944 worked on the Lae airfield (and access to it) and other tasks on the north coast. It built storage and administrative facilities at Nadzab, along with the new Texter airfield. By March, the Squadron had erected a camp site for 62 Works Wing, as well as administrative facilities to allow 62 Wing to effectively control the works units operating in the area. A month later Newton and Texter airfields were finished along with a wharf and slipway at Lae, and more buildings to house Northern Command. Separate to the main effort, a detachment was also situated on Goodenough Island tasked with processing equipment and stores for Nadzab. This detachment was the first to return to Australia, on 17 April 1944.

The remainder of the Squadron followed the Goodenough detachment in late May 1944, arriving at Ransford, Victoria, on 1 June. After a months leave and a change of name to 2 Airfield Construction Squadron, the unit reformed in July for weapons training at Shepparton, Victoria, followed by further training in August at Mount Martha. In late September the majority of the Squadron moved to Randwick Racecourse in Sydney, while a section was stationed at St Georges Basin near Nowra to assist in extending the facilities there. Other detachments were sent to build runways at Schofields and Fleurs, New South Wales. This continued until early March 1945 when the Squadron returned to Sydney in anticipation of a move northward. The Squadron arrived at Morotai on 18 April and was used in road construction while awaiting embarkation with the 'Oboe 2' force, bound for Balikpapan.

While the main body waited, a detachment travelled with 'Oboe 4' to assist in airfield construction at Labuan Bay. By mid-July the main body was committed at Balikpapan, tasked with the rehabilitation of Sepinang

airfield, along with work on the Vasey road. Other detachments were also sent to Tarakan to erect facilities for 452 Squadron. With the cessation of hostilities the requirement for units such as 2 Airfield Construction Squadron diminished and on 4 December 1945 it was disbanded at Balikpapan.

On 19 April 1947, the Squadron was reformed and immediately tasked with disassembling and moving surplus equipment from Darwin, Uranquinty and Parafield to the new development at Woomera range. For four years the Squadron remained in South Australia—first at Pimba, then at Woomera West—and while at these locations it was tasked to build various camp facilities, roads, railways, pipelines and an airfield for the Woomera range named Evetts Field. The work at Woomera was interrupted during 1949 when personnel from the Squadron were used near Marangaroo to assist in open-cut coal mining during the New South Wales coal strike.

By the middle of 1951 work at the Long Range Weapons Establishment had been completed and the unit prepared to move both personnel and equipment to the Cocos Islands to construct permanent buildings, a water supply and a paved runway for the Department of Civil Aviation, while the Royal Navy needed associated works completed on nearby Direction Island. The Squadron arrived by 23 January 1952, and the first trial Qantas aircraft from South Africa landed on 18 July 1952. Although a success, the operation was marred by the drowning of two RAAF personnel along with a Royal Navy sailor from the visiting HMS *Zeebrugge* and *Navic*.

In November of that year, the majority of the Squadron was deployed to Momote in the Admiralty Islands to construct a 10 000-foot runway for the RAAF, a control tower, roads, buildings and supply facilities for water, petrol and electricity, as well as facilities for the Royal Australian Naval Works at Lombium. Detachment 'A' remained behind to complete construction works at Direction Island, while Detachment 'B' operated in the Townsville area. These detachments rejoined the main body at Momote in January 1954 and the unit returned to Australia in April (although a section was left behind on the island until August 1955).

While in Australia, the Squadron was engaged in quarrying and road construction at Garbutt, as well as aerodrome maintenance. On 10 August 1955, the Squadron was posted to Malaya to assist in the 'Butterworth Reconstruction Project', designed to provide the RAAF with

a forward airfield in Malaya and involving the construction of permanent facilities and the extension of existing runways and taxiways.

After three years the Squadron returned to Australia, arriving at East Sale on 1 August 1958. There it occupied itself with upgrading the facilities until 28 April 1961, when 2 Airfield Construction Squadron disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

10 June 1942	—Squadron Leader C.J. Trewin
13 September 1943	—Squadron Leader W.S. Arthur
22 April 1945	—Flying Officer E. Smith
17 October 1947	—Squadron Leader W.A. Sansum
26 February 1949	—Squadron Leader A.M. Harrison
7 September 1949	—Flight Lieutenant P.G. Lings

3 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

CHRONOLOGY

25 May 1942	—formed as 3 Works Maintenance Unit at Darwin, NT
15 January 1943	—re-named 3 Mobile Works Squadron
8 March 1944	—departed Darwin for Ransford, Vic.
July 1944	—re-named 3 Airfield Construction Squadron
3 August 1944	—departed Ransford for Sydney, NSW
12 July 1944	—departed Sydney for Morotai
24 November 1944	—departed Morotai for Leyte
12 December 1944	—departed Leyte for Mindoro
18 June 1945	—departed Mindoro for Morotai
12 July 1945	—departed Morotai for Balikpapan
30 October 1945	—last entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

The Squadron began life as 3 Works Maintenance Unit on 25 May 1942 at Darwin. On 15 January 1943, the unit was re-named as 3 Mobile Works Squadron.

The unit operated throughout the Northern Territory—at Headquarters in Darwin, and at airfields such as Coomalie, Daly Waters, Livingstone, Strauss, Fenton, McDonald, Hughes, Batchelor and Bathurst Island. At this time the Squadron was employed in enlarging landing areas, erecting buildings and, eventually, a radiosonde meteorological station near Darwin. During this time, the north of Australia was subjected to aerial bombardment by the Japanese, and this increased the demand for units such as this.

March 1944 saw the unit withdraw to Victoria for leave and re-equipping. While initially at Ransford, the unit travelled to Sydney to prepare for deployment northwards once more. The unit changed its name to 3 Airfield Construction Squadron and in late July embarked on two ships for Aitape, arriving in August. There the unit camped briefly

before being transported to Morotai where work was required on the Wama and Pitoe strips.

In November the Squadron left for Leyte and on arrival was engaged in unloading the convoy vessels during which time the Japanese attempted to disrupt activities through heavy air raids. Despite the presence of the enemy aircraft, the operation was accomplished without loss. The convoy was then reloaded in preparation for the assault on Mindoro Island. Secrecy was impossible to maintain and 'Tokyo Rose', the Japanese propaganda radio station, made references concerning the force on the evening of 10 December 1944. The assault finally began at dawn on 15 December, with 3 Airfield Construction Squadron landing in the centre of the assault, alongside the first waves of infantry. By that evening, the Squadron and most of its equipment was 2 miles inland, near the proposed site of Hill Field and away from the persistent air attacks. Midday on 16 December saw the first work begun on the new strip, which was intended to be 6000 feet long. Meanwhile, back on the beach, Leading Aircraftman Barham was struck and killed by a piece of an exploding Japanese suicide aircraft. The aircraft was attempting to crash through the open bow doors of a Landing Ship Tank (LST) from which members of the Squadron were unloading the remainder of the unit's equipment.

The estimated date for completion of the strip was 20 December 1944, and by 17 December over 500 feet of jungle had been cleared. By 19 December, with some assistance from the American Engineer Battalion, the strip was completed and Dakota transports followed by fighter aircraft landed on the following day. The fast construction of the field is even more significant considering that the Squadron also had to defend 2500 yards of perimeter and maintain the rail yards and electrical supply at the nearby town of San Jose. Most personnel got little sleep, and machinery operators only left their equipment when an air attack on their position was imminent.

By 24 December, there had been over 100 air raids, but although some damage was caused to the Squadron's machinery, work began on the new 'Elmore Field', near San Jose. Two days later the Japanese Navy made a determined effort to recapture Mindoro—a force of two battleships, four cruisers, eight destroyers and 12 troop transports appeared off the coast and shelled the beaches occupied by the Allied assault force. 3 Airfield Construction Squadron personnel dug into their defensive positions but were shelled along with Hill Field, while Elmore

Field and San Jose also received attention from the Japanese. Additionally, volunteers manned supply trucks during the height of the barrage, transporting ordnance from the beaches to the Allied bombers stationed inland.

By the morning of 27 December 1944 the enemy force was well out to sea and a check of their positions showed the Squadron still at full strength, with only a handful of minor shell-shock cases. It proceeded with the work at hand and, although hampered by craters and unexploded ordnance, by 30 December 1944 the Squadron had completed all tasks required of it, including the 6500-foot strip at Elmore Field.

While the battle front moved gradually away, and enemy air attacks diminished in size and vigour, the Squadron remained until 19 June 1945. During this time, it built two 7000-foot runways, maintained 30 miles of roads and constructed the buildings and facilities necessary for the occupation forces. As a result of this, the Squadron was recommended for the Meritorious Service Plaque by the American engineer in charge, although unfortunately this award could only be given to American units.

The Squadron's next destination was Morotai, to prepare for the landings at Balikpapan. After the assault, 3 Airfield Construction Squadron was tasked with maintaining roads between the two Manggar rivers. It continued on this task until the end of the War, when it was disbanded in the field.

The final entry in the Unit History Record was made on 30 October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

25 February 1942	—Squadron Leader M.G. Murchison
1 January 1943	—Squadron Leader A.D. Bouch
21 May 1945	—Flight Lieutenant Langley

4 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

CHRONOLOGY

9 June 1942	—formed as 4 Mobile Works Squadron at Ascot Vale, Vic.
July 1942	—detachments left for Queensland and Papua New Guinea
14 February 1942	—arrived Port Moresby
3 August 1943	—moved to Goodenough Island
15 July 1944	—re-named 4 Airfield Construction Squadron
September 1944	—moved to Noemfoor
January 1945	—moved to Biak
10 May 1945	—moved to Morotai
30 October 1945	—last entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

The forerunner to 4 Airfield Construction Squadron—4 Mobile Works Squadron—was formed on 9 June 1942 at RAAF Ascot Vale, Victoria. Under the command of Flight Lieutenant Hoddinott, the unit prepared to move north in support of Allied operations. A detachment left for Port Moresby, via 2 Embarkation Depot at Bradfield Park, less than a month after the unit's formation. The rest of the unit travelled to Queensland, where it was tasked at various locations for a variety of jobs.

From Townsville, a detachment left for Horn Island on 5 September, with the remainder of 4 Mobile Works Squadron employed at Garbutt, Bohle River and Aitkenvale. The Townsville strip needed access roads and bomb dispersals, with 4 miles of roads finally being constructed. Similar works were required at Bohle River. At Aitkenvale, however, the Squadron was involved in the construction of buildings to accommodate the school and messes as well as 100 Squadron, 107 and 108 Radio Stations.

In October, detachments left Townsville for Papua New Guinea, with five staff leaving on the 11th and another 25 on the 26th. During this time those of the unit remaining in Queensland continued to provide

assistance to many units and areas. The runways at Townsville were enhanced, sheds were constructed at Bohle River, anti-aircraft artillery sites were established at St John River, and Aitkenvale had dispersal areas cleared. The detachment at Port Moresby constructed sheds and facilities for 9 Operational Group and the detachment on Horn Island dug trenches for the fuel dispersal area and maintained the Allied camp.

Within the month, another 34 staff travelled to Gurney, leaving on the 15th and arriving on the 19th. Hoddinott travelled widely, dividing his time between Townsville, Horn Island and Port Moresby. Work continued as before, with the various sections of the Squadron employed in drainage, construction, road work and in the supply of water. The Port Moresby detachment also assisted other units such as 33 Squadron, 6 Squadron and 138 Radio Station in the construction of their respective base camps.

On the first day of 1943 the unit received word that it would soon be moving to Gurney. A message later changed the destination to Port Moresby. On the 20th, a signal was received for the unit to embark on the *George Matthews*. Eventually, on 10 February 1943, the Squadron loaded onto the *Joseph Holt* for Port Moresby. In early March, an additional 83 airmen were attached from the Works Training Unit—in particular carpenters, to assist with the Squadron's next task of building facilities for 15 Aircraft Repair Depot and 6 Supply and Support Unit.

The Squadron came under its first air attack on 12 March 1943 when 32 Japanese aircraft attacked causing damage to the camp site and surrounds.

Preparations were commenced for the Squadron's next deployment—52 men and their equipment left for Goodenough Island aboard four Douglas transport aircraft; 44 subsequently embarked on the *Joseph Holt* for Gurney in June. A further 58 men deployed to Goodenough Island in August and 20 personnel continued on to Nadzab. As a result of the move forward, the Moresby detachment was disbanded on 21 December 1943.

On 15 July 1944, 4 Mobile Works Squadron was re-named 4 Airfield Construction Squadron.

September saw the Squadron involved with strip works on Noemfoor, at the Kornasoren Field. By November work was progressing at Kornasoren and Kamiri strips, in addition to roads, sawmills and camp sites. The unit also underwent refresher training in small arms.

Manning levels during this period were of particular concern, with true manning often 25 per cent below the established number. Additionally, transportation was a problem, with the Commanding Officer commenting in March 1945 that the Squadron still had 91 members in Townsville awaiting passage north.

The Squadron deployed to Biak Island in January 1945, stayed until May and then moved to Morotai in preparation for the 'Oboe 6' landings. On 10 June 1945 the Squadron landed at Labuan, where it constructed an airfield for bomber operations, an access road and accommodation huts.

The final entry in the Unit History Record was 30 October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

9 June 1942	—Flight Lieutenant R.U. Hoddinott
24 June 1943	—Flight Lieutenant F.W. Murphy
31 May 1944	—Flight Lieutenant G.W. Barlow
26 March 1945	—Flight Lieutenant J.B. Carroll

5 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

Always First



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 7 July 1942 | —formed as 1 Mobile Works Squadron at Ascot Vale, Vic. |
| 7 August 1942 | —arrived Port Moresby |
| 16 November 1942 | —re-named 5 Mobile Works Squadron |
| 11 May 1943 | —moved to Goodenough Island |
| 1 January 1944 | —arrived at Ransford, Vic. |
| 22 April 1944 | —landed at Aitape/Tadji strip |
| 2 July 1944 | —landed at Noemfoor Island |
| 18 July 1944 | —re-named 5 Airfield Construction Squadron |
| December 1944 | —landed at Biak Island |
| 10 June 1945 | —landed at Labuan Island |
| 25 February 1946 | —Headquarters established at Iwakuni, Japan |
| 30 June 1949 | —Squadron disbanded |
| 8 August 1951 | —reactivated at Bankstown, NSW |
| 1 June 1955 | —re-located to Darwin |
| 24 June 1964 | —arrived at Tindal, NT |
| January 1971 | —arrived at Learmonth, WA |
| December 1974 | —Squadron disbanded |

NARRATIVE

18 5 Airfield Construction Squadron began life as an offshoot of 1 Mobile Works Squadron, when it was decided that there was a requirement for

construction support in New Guinea. The new unit, 1 Mobile Works Squadron (Special Works Force), was formed at Ascot Vale on 7 July 1942 using men from 1 Mobile Works Station. Squadron Leader T.M. Scott was subsequently placed in command of the new unit and one month later the Squadron disembarked at Port Moresby.

The initial purpose was to complete airfield construction at Wards Strip, with the first runway being completed in only three weeks. Considerable effort had to be expended at the time to improve drainage, as the soil was a fine grey clay, which became thick mud at the hint of rain. While the Squadron was at Moresby, Wards Strip was the only all-weather runway and, during one week in January 1943, the only serviceable airfield in the New Guinea area.

In mid-November 1942 the Special Works Force was re-named 5 Mobile Works Squadron. In March of 1943 a detachment was sent to Milne Bay to assist 6 Mobile Works Squadron, while the remainder of the unit prepared to move to Goodenough Island—at that time the most recent Allied occupation. On Goodenough the Squadron was engaged in the construction of the Vivigani strip, using pre-formed steel. During this time the unit was constantly on alert for air and sea attack, while Japanese survivors from the Bismarck Sea battle also landed.

Following the completion of its tasks on Goodenough, the Squadron sailed south for rest and recuperation, initially to Ransford, then on to Sydney. After a break of one month, 5 Mobile Works Squadron reformed and returned to New Guinea, landing after the assault forces at Aitape on the northern coast. There, the unit made the Tadjji strip operational in 45 hours. The next move was to Noemfoor Island, where the Squadron assisted American and British construction units in the construction of two 7000-foot runways at Kornasoren. Additionally, while manning the perimeter defences, the Squadron captured 12 Japanese infiltrators.

As of 18 July 1944, the Squadron became known as 5 Airfield Construction Squadron. While at Kornasoren, four members of the Squadron won awards for the following action, as described in the unit's history sheets:

9 September 1944 Noemfoor—a B-24 bomber crashed into a lagoon after taking off from Kornasoren, approximately 1/2 mile off shore. Despite the fact that the aircraft was fully bombed and there was a danger of fire from leaking petrol, four airmen courageously swam out to the crashed aircraft. These men were 125360 LAC B.A. Churchill, 117483 LAC H.J. Flannery, 141497 LAC

J.R.C. Thompson and 70412 LAC L.W. Walsh. LAC Churchill was outstanding as he swam out alone to the aircraft and extricated two members of the crew before anyone reached the aircraft. The other three members came out in a native canoe and dinghy and each brought one of the crew ashore.

For their efforts, three of the men were mentioned in despatches, whilst Leading Aircraftman Churchill received the British Empire Medal.

In late 1944, the unit moved to nearby Biak Island, where work was required on Sorido, Borokoe and Mokmer strips. There the unit remained until 10 June 1945, when it followed the assault troops onto the beaches of Labuan. Its main goal was the rehabilitation of the Labuan airfield, which had suffered from the combined effects of Allied bombing and Japanese mining. This was planned to be completed by 6 June, and the first Allied fighters began operations on 18 June.

Following the capitulation of the Japanese, 5 Airfield Construction Squadron became part of the occupation force on the Japanese mainland. The Squadron embarked on Landing Ship Tanks, for the destination of Iwakuni. There the unit occupied a disused sea plane base and converted the remaining hangars to workshops and equipment stores. Although under-manned, the unit was tasked to assist with many jobs which were not strictly within the realms of an airfield construction squadron. Despite this, almost all works requested were satisfactorily completed. The unit remained in Japan for a further three years until 30 June 1949; it was disbanded in the field.

There remained a requirement for engineering support such as that supplied by the airfield construction squadrons. Less than two years later, the unit was reactivated at Bankstown, New South Wales, working at Bankstown, Richmond, Kingswood, Regents Park and Williamtown. In March 1952 a detachment travelled to the Monte Bello Islands off Western Australia to support the nuclear weapon testing planned in conjunction with the British, remaining in place until November of that year. Over the next three years the Squadron also had a detachment at Woomera to assist with construction of range facilities.

In 1955, the Squadron moved to Darwin in the Northern Territory to construct a 13 000-foot runway and facilities. By early 1964 the works in Darwin were complete, and the unit moved a short distance south to Tindal, near Katherine, to construct a 9000-foot runway and taxiways, along with power facilities and other buildings. There was little evidence of modern civilisation prior to its arrival, and the Squadron was forced to

import or build much of its requirements. For instance, due to the climate of the Northern Territory, refrigeration equipment had to be transported in and maintained. This was not for the Squadron's comfort but to cool water for the concrete.

1966 and 1967 saw the formation of three detachments to assist with works throughout Australia and South-East Asia. Detachment 'A' operated first at Vung Tau from June 1966 until August 1967, then moved to Darwin. Detachment 'B' was formed on 1 February 1967, working at Phan Rang followed by a stint at Vung Tau. Detachment 'C' remained in Australia, moving to RAAF Amberley, to pave the way for the main body, which arrived in Queensland in December 1969. A small party remained at Tindal to finish up, while the main party began work on the 82 Wing hardstanding.

Work continued there for the next two years, and meanwhile Detachment 'E' was formed in March 1970 in response to a Department of Air decision to upgrade the facilities at Learmonth, Western Australia. The rest of the Squadron members followed in January 1971, where they remained until December 1974. The task they faced was to upgrade the 1943-era runway, including the installation of crash barriers and navigational aids, to allow heavy aircraft as well as fighters to operate from the base.

It was decided in 1974 to disband 5 Airfield Construction Squadron, and in December of that year the unit had its final parade.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

22 July 1942	—Squadron Leader T.M. Scott
22 July 1943	—Flight Lieutenant G.W. Barlow
7 August 1943	—Flight Lieutenant J.F. Hawe
17 August 1943	—Squadron Leader J.N. Edwards
11 September 1945	—Flight Lieutenant A.J. Fowler
16 November 1945	—Wing Commander A.M. Harrison
3 April 1947	—Flight Lieutenant A.S. Brown
31 August 1947	—Wing Commander A.M. Harrison
15 October 1948	—Flight Lieutenant T.A. Westley
8 August 1951	—Group Captain A.M. Harrison
17 July 1959	—Wing Commander A.G. Woolley
23 May 1961	—Group Captain P.G. Lings
29 November 1963	—Wing Commander J.F. Dawson
11 January 1971	—Wing Commander J.D.G. Lessels

6 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 10 December 1942 | —formed as 6 Mobile Works Squadron at Ascot Vale, Vic. |
| 19 January 1943 | —completed move to Bankstown, NSW |
| 27 January 1943 | —advance party departed for Milne Bay |
| 5 August 1943 | —arrived at Kiriwina |
| 1 December 1943 | —landed at Lae |
| 23 April 1944 | —deployed to Aitape/Tadji strip |
| 4 April 1945 | —arrived at Morotai |
| 5 July 1945 | —landed at Borneo |
| 30 October 1945 | —final entry in Unit History Record |

NARRATIVE

The first members of the then 6 Mobile Works Squadron arrived at Ascot Vale on 10 December 1942, and were followed by one officer and 293 men on 17 December. During this time, the unit moved to Royal Park to collect more men and machinery. The Squadron was transported to Glebe, New South Wales, in January 1943 and then on to Bankstown, the move being completed by the 19th.

An advance party left for Milne Bay on 27 January, leaving behind 15 officers and 393 men. The Squadron, however, was not far behind, loading their equipment and themselves onto the *George McCrary* on 3 February. The Squadron disembarked at Milne Bay on 13 February after a stop-over at Townsville, where Leading Aircraftman Truscott was transferred to Townsville Hospital, having fractured his skull on board.

Although the unit arrived on 13 February, the equipment did not arrive until the following week. On 22 February the unit began construction of a camp and access roads, by the middle of March the camp was completed and by the end of the month the Squadron had created an airstrip 6000 feet long by 100 feet wide, with gravel to a depth of 12 inches.

April saw the Squadron completing the airstrip and taxiways, as well as building a radio station and some huts for an American squadron. On

14 April the unit had to repair bomb damage from an enemy raid, and 18 wet days in a row slowed construction. The first 10 days of May saw almost continuous rainfall, which led to a cessation of work. On 20 May, the shifts were rescheduled to allow night work.

The first aircraft operations were conducted from the strip on 14 July, despite the ongoing rains. The next day, due to the heavy rainfalls, the Squadron's mining plant was moved from the previous land quarry and set up beside the river to take advantage of the river gravel present. Although not of as high quality as the land gravel, it had the advantage of being more easily worked when wet.

In late July, the Commanding Officer travelled to Kiriwina to personally survey the Squadron's next destination. On 30 July the Squadron began loading onto two Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) in preparation for transportation to Kiriwina. By 3 August the first LST had arrived, and by 5 August the second had been unloaded. This left 70 personnel still at Milne Bay.

The initial clearing and gravelling of the runway at Kiriwina had been completed by 17 August, with only the top preparation to be applied, and construction of the taxiways. On 10 October, the runway was declared open to all categories of aircraft, with the taxiways suitable only for fighter aircraft.

In December the Squadron redeployed to Lae. On 20 November the Milne Bay detachment, having completed all tasks at hand, boarded the SS *Karsik*, bound for the main body of 6 Mobile Works Squadron. They arrived at Lae on 24 November.

On 1 December the LSTs landed at Heath's Plantation, near Lae, to unload the main body of the Squadron. Their first task was the upgrading of the road from Lae to Nadzab, followed by the construction of Newton Field (named after the RAAF VC winner, Flight Lieutenant William Newton). At this stage the Squadron strength was 478 enlisted men and 19 officers. At the beginning of 1944 the unit finished work on Newton and began construction of Texter Field, and also a 10-day refresher course in weapons handling and fieldcraft.

On 5 April, the Squadron began to move back towards Lae along the road that it had built. From there Squadron personnel were transported to Aitape, landing on 23 April. On Aitape, the Squadron assisted in the construction of the Tadjji strip.

From the beginning of May, the Squadron worked on the construction of facilities for 111 Fighter Sector Command Post. On 7 May, building of

the site for 10 Operational Group, as well as 78 Wing, was commenced. On 16 May, all heavy plant and equipment was loaned to 7 Mobile Works Squadron.

Towards the end of June 1944, the unit received word its return to Australia was approaching, and preparations were made for the move south. On 1 July the Milne Bay and Goodenough detachments assembled, and on 16 July 51 members of the Squadron left Milne Bay by barge for Goodenough, along with two days rations. After the barge became overdue, a search by sea and air commenced and it was finally discovered at Sura Bay with all members in good health.

By the end of July, the main body of the Squadron had reached Australia for a months leave. While the bulk of personnel were travelling by ship to Sydney or by train from Brisbane, a small core of the unit set up the Squadron's orderly room at Ransford, Victoria. Due to the large numbers on leave, the unit remained relatively inactive until 9 September, when word was received for the Squadron to proceed to Mt Martha, Victoria, for weapons training between 25 September and 19 November 1944.

The unit undertook civil works in Victoria until 24 February 1945, when it moved to Sydney before deploying to Morotai. An advance party reached Morotai on 4 April, but the rest of the Squadron did not arrive for over a month, primarily due to transport difficulties.

Once on Morotai, the unit began road construction and assisted in the preparation of facilities for the 'Oboe' landings. On 24 May a detachment proceeded by LST to Tawitawi. By 5 July, the Squadron was able to unload at Klandasan, Borneo, where they were employed on the construction of the airfield at Sepinang. The rear guard from Morotai reached Borneo on 31 July 1945 in time for a gradual winding down of the unit's activities.

The final entry in the Unit History Record is dated 30 October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

29 December 1942 —Squadron Leader J.F. Keays

31 January 1944 —Squadron Leader D.C. Farran

7 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

CHRONOLOGY

18 January 1943	—established at Flemington, Vic.
17 March 1943	—unloaded at Milne Bay
17 April 1943	—arrived at Goodenough Island
9 December 1943	—deployed to Nadzab from Lae
22 April 1944	—landed at Aitape
12 July 1944	—arrived at Noemfoor
15 July 1944	—re-named 7 Airfield Construction Squadron
19 September 1944	—established at Ransford, Vic.
25 October 1944	—Mt Martha for defence training
31 May 1945	—arrived at Bougainville
2 January 1947	—Squadron disbanded

NARRATIVE

The first members of the then 7 Mobile Works Squadron were posted into Flemington in January 1943. The unit was formed officially on 18 January, with a strength of 10 officers and 275 other ranks and transferred to Bankstown, New South Wales, then on to Glebe Island in readiness for transportation northwards.

On 3 March 1943, the unit left Sydney in convoy, via Townsville, and arrived at Port Moresby on 15 March 1943. Although the unit began to off-load, word was received to continue to Milne Bay, which it reached on 17 March. Three days later the unit experienced its first Japanese air attack, with no damage inflicted. The attack continued the next day, as a detachment of 40 members of 7 Mobile Works Squadron prepared to travel to Goodenough Island.

The first half of April was occupied by the redeployment of the unit to Goodenough Island, with detachments travelling on the *Mulcra*, *Nujinio* and *George Peat*. The unit experienced the Japanese attack on Milne Bay on 14 April 1943, when 47 bombers accompanied by 30 fighters had as their main target Number 3 strip and adjoining facilities. Three days later, the last 30 members of the unit left Milne Bay to commence work

on the construction of squadron camps, runways and taxiways at Goodenough Island.

Although progress on the strips was delayed by rain and the collapse of a gravel-maker, a Beaufort squadron landed on the temporary strip in mid-May. On 13 June, an air raid occurred during the weekly picture show—the five bombs dropped caused minor damage and no casualties.

Lae became the unit's destination in early December 1943, with the Squadron moving by means of Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs), before establishing itself at Nadzab. Despite air raids, strip construction began. The Japanese did not make their presence known until the middle of January 1944, when the unit was strafed by six 'Tony' aircraft, causing little damage.

February 1944 was marked by a single Zero aircraft strafing the field while the unit prepared to move to the nearby Texter Field.

A sporting day was held by the Squadron to celebrate the first anniversary of its departure from Australia. The day was a great success, with over 2000 people in attendance. April 1944 saw the unit again embark on LSTs to practise unloading onto beachheads.

On 22 April 1944, the Squadron took part in the assault on Aitape, without loss. Initial works involved bridging the Waitana River, and construction of a fighter strip. As extra units landed, 7 Mobile Works Squadron was retasked to build a bomber strip, while 5 and 6 Mobile Works Squadrons would continue the work on the first strip. On 28 April, an air raid alert was given, but bombs were only heard falling out to sea.

The Squadron embarked in early July 1944 and arrived at Noemfoor on 12 July. The Japanese attacked Kamiri strip the next day, resulting in only minor damage to the runway.

The unit title was changed on 15 July 1944, to 7 Airfield Construction Squadron.

On 20 August, the Squadron was ordered to prepare to return to Australia and on 19 September arrived at Ransford, Victoria, and personnel departed on well-earned leave.

The majority of personnel returned for a five-day exercise in mid-January 1945. By the end of the month the Squadron had established itself at Randwick, New South Wales, and was waiting for transport north. A Liberty ship was loaded at Glebe Island, but the unit was still waiting for forward movement in March. During this month, 75 airmen

were attached to the Royal New Zealand Air Force units operating in the north.

It was not until May 1945 that the last 147 men were loaded onto the *William A. Henry*. Conditions were cramped, with extra stores being loaded on board in Townsville, forcing the men into a confined hold. Meals were served between landing craft loaded on deck, and many of the injuries incurred aboard were burns and cuts, attributed to the cramped conditions, where the men were forced to scramble around barnacle-covered boats in order to eat, with the cooks in the same situation.

By the end of the month the entire Squadron was deployed, with detachments on Green Island, Aitape and Emirau Island as well as a main contingent on Bougainville. The main contingent worked on Piva Airfield, while the other groups assisted the local commanders with construction tasks. This continued until July 1945, when the detachment at Green Island was moved to Jacquinot Bay.

The Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader Lawrence, attended the surrender of a Japanese detachment at Nauru. The unit worked on until 1946, with a gradual reduction in personnel as time-expired members were repatriated home.

The Squadron officially ceased to function on 2 January 1947.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

21 January 1943	—Flight Lieutenant J.G. Baddeley
6 February 1944	—Flight Lieutenant G.W. Barlow
30 May 1945	—Squadron Leader D.S. Lawrence
14 March 1946	—Flying Officer R.E. Orr

8 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

CHRONOLOGY

1 January 1943	—formed as 8 Mobile Works Squadron at Ascot Vale, Vic.
4 May 1943	—advance party arrived at Venn Airfield, NT
July 1944	—returned to Melbourne
15 July 1944	—re-named 8 Airfield Construction Squadron
10 April 1945	—left Sydney for Morotai
1 May 1945	—disembarked at Tarakan
July 1945	—moved from Tarakan to Balikpapan
December 1945	—disbanded at Mt Druitt, NSW

NARRATIVE

8 Airfield Construction Squadron evolved from 8 Mobile Works Squadron, which was formed at Ascot Vale on 1 January 1943. Destined for North-Western Area, the unit first moved to Flemington, Victoria, while a small detachment travelled to Gawler, South Australia. At Flemington the Squadron collected its equipment and prepared both personnel and stores for the trip north. On 4 May 1943 the advance party reached Venn Airstrip, Northern Territory, and commenced work.

Their first task was the construction of a road between the bases at Long and Fenton, which was completed after one week. Meanwhile, a detachment travelled to Manbulloo for maintenance work. On 30 June 1943 the Squadron encountered its first signs of the enemy—21 Japanese bombers in formation bombed the American base at Fenton. On 4 July revetment work was commenced at Fenton. During August a detachment proceeded to Melville Bay to sink water bores and assemble facilities for a full-scale move to Melville. In November, the grading of Rooney's Route and other maintenance duties were commenced.

The Squadron was re-named 8 Airfield Construction Squadron on 15 July 1944 and, after a year in the tropics, returned to Melbourne for a two-month break and a re-organisation. Reforming in September,

members were sent to Mt Martha to undergo ground combat training. Instead of returning to the northern areas of Australia, 8 Airfield Construction Squadron travelled to Sydney by road in October, where it assisted the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm to improve facilities at Bankstown, New South Wales.

In February 1945, the unit began loading the Liberty ship *Helena Majeske*. On 10 April it departed from Sydney for a 15-day journey to Morotai via the Coral Sea, Finschhafen, Hollandia and Biak, arriving on 25 April. On 1 May, the Squadron disembarked at Tarakan, where roads and bridges damaged or mined by the Japanese had to be repaired. The unit developed techniques to disable mines and booby traps.

The Squadron was constantly threatened by the remnants of the Japanese forces on Borneo. On the night of 31 May 1945, infiltrators attempted to overrun the unit camp, resulting in one Australian and four Japanese being killed. Two months of hard work produced a barely serviceable strip which suffered from the effects of the climate and the topography of the site.

The unit was redeployed to Balikpapan, making landfall on 9 July, and was then tasked to complete the return taxiway at Sepinang. After this had been completed, the Squadron began construction of a 7000-foot runway at Manggar, along with maintenance work on the Vasey Highway between Batakan Besar and Manggar Ketjil.

The Squadron continued maintenance work for several months before returning to Australia.

In December 1945, 8 Airfield Construction Squadron was disbanded at Mt Druitt, New South Wales.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 27 January 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant J. Evans |
| 11 February 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant H.V. Davies |

9 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

CHRONOLOGY

4 January 1943	—established at Royal Park, Vic.
25 April 1943	—arrived at Kapooka, NSW
11 July 1943	—deployed to the Northern Territory
15 July 1944	—re-named 9 Airfield Construction Squadron
16 November 1944	—reformed Mt Martha for further training
February–	
August 1945	—deployed to New South Wales and Victoria for works projects
31 August 1945	—arrived at Balikpapan
15 December 1945	—Squadron disbanded

NARRATIVE

9 Airfield Construction Squadron began its existence as 9 Works Maintenance Unit on 4 January 1943. Although initially billeted at Royal Park, Victoria, the unit moved to Ryder Oval, Brunswick, to wait for additional personnel and the heavy equipment. By April much of the equipment had still not arrived, so the unit was despatched to Kapooka, where members received training under the supervision of the Royal Australian Engineers Training Centre. This training continued for three months, during which time the unit was instructed in basic construction and demolition work, fieldcraft and weapon handling, and ordnance disposal. The majority of the personnel returned to Melbourne on 10 July, to prepare to deploy northwards next day.

In July advance parties travelled to the Northern Territory to survey suitable locations and provide for the unit's arrival. By August detachments were established at Larrimah, Livingstone, Strauss, Hughes, Coomalie Creek, Darwin and Howard River.

The unit experienced its first air raid on the night of 12 November, when a lone Japanese aircraft dropped five bombs about a mile away. During the next month, the unit was directed to assume responsibility for works then in progress by 3 Mobile Works Squadron. As a response, a

work cycle of three seven-hour shifts was instituted, providing a three-hour maintenance period for plant and allowing greater serviceability.

Heavy rains throughout the region in the new year hampered work and movement. During March, the movement of a large detachment of men to Rapid Creek, Darwin, was completed.

The unit suffered its first fatality on 11 May 1944, when Leading Aircraftman S.J. Hall was killed by rock thrown up from blasting operations near Rapid Creek. He was buried two days later in the Adelaide River War Cemetery. By mid-1944 the unit was dispersed, with 283 men at Rapid Creek, 58 at 34 Mile camp, five at 40 Mile Creek and 23 at the Batchelor Road camp. Later that month the unit built a fighter strip on Melville Island, which required the attachment of several small vessels to the unit to transport equipment.

On 15 July 1944 the unit was officially re-named 9 Airfield Construction Squadron. Two months later word was received that the unit was to prepare for leave in the south, and it began releasing personnel on 25 September 1944. An orderly room was established at 1 Personnel Depot eight days later. On 16 November the unit proceeded to Mt Martha for training under the instruction of the RAAF Combat Training Unit. This continued until 12 January 1945. For the next six months, the Squadron was used in small detachments throughout Victoria and New South Wales, at Point Cook, Laverton, East Sale, Canberra, Mascot, Lithgow and Camden.

The Squadron was thrust back into the War at Balikpapan on 31 August 1945, where it maintained sections of the Vasey Highway and undertook bridging tasks. Morale declined as the public belief that the War was nearly over caused disciplinary problems and unrest.

With the cessation of hostilities the unit remained on Borneo, causing further problems as construction crews who had landed earlier in the War were preparing to depart. Additionally, with most of their equipment already loaded, members of these units had plenty of free time. Morale fell until those units had departed, when the Squadron accepted responsibility for all works.

The Squadron was fully disbanded on 15 December 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 27 January 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant E. Jeavous |
| 11 February 1943 | —Squadron Leader H.V. Davies |

14 AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION SQUADRON

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 20 July 1943 | —formed as 14 Mobile Works Squadron from 1 Mobile Works Squadron |
| 11 December 1943 | —began movement south for leave |
| 5 January 1944 | —reformed at Ransford, Vic. |
| 20 March 1944 | —operations recommenced in North-Western Area |
| 15 September 1944 | —landed at Morotai |
| 6 December 1945 | —Squadron disbanded at Morotai |

NARRATIVE

On 20 July 1943, 14 Mobile Works Squadron was formed as a result of the splitting of 1 Mobile Works Squadron. As with the creation of 5 Mobile Works Squadron, an experienced cadre of workmen and technicians was transferred to form the nucleus of the new unit. The next day, two officers from the Squadron travelled to Darwin to begin a survey of the Northern Area. It was intended at that stage that the unit would replace 1 Mobile Works Squadron in the Northern Territory. The officers inspected the Coomalie and Fenton works, as well as Darwin. At this time the Squadron was in the process of formation, with its 432 members taking over operations in the Fenton area. One month after formation, the unit suffered an air attack when the Coomalie, Fenton and Pell areas were struck on 21 August 1943.

At the beginning of July, work on 7 Camp at Fenton was 65 per cent complete. Construction of the airstrip and connecting roads at Fenton was also under way, with the long strip at the airfield ready for tar priming later that month. The Squadron and surrounding areas suffered intermittent early morning attacks during this time, although little or no damage was caused. The attack on the morning of 12 November 1943 was the last enemy raid on the Australian mainland.

Personnel returning from leave in the new year reported to Headquarters, Ransford, Victoria, where they prepared for the move to North-Western Area, first moving to Wonga Park on 31 January 1944.

Following re-organisation and training in Victoria, the Squadron commenced deployment to North-Western Area in early March. By the end of that month the unit had recommenced operations, with detachments at Coomalie, Winnellie and also with 11 Works Supply Unit. Most of the Squadron's duties at this stage were preparing equipment for transportation to Truscott Airfield. As a result, the Coomalie Base Workshops were closed early in April, with the Squadron arriving at Truscott in the first week of May.

Drainage for the airstrip was the Squadron's first task, with the erection of the Operational Base Unit camp and hospital also commenced within the week. By 24 May 1944 the Truscott airstrip had been lengthened to 8000 feet and the hardstanding area at the northern end of the strip had been expanded to a total of 12 000 feet. The first operations from Truscott were initiated on 16 July, with all aircraft taking off and returning successfully. This airstrip was the first bomber strip of its type to be completed in Australian territory and the Squadron was subsequently chosen for the construction work to be completed at Morotai, in the Celebes Sea.

The deployment to Morotai was completed on 15 September 1944 and work began on strip clearing, the construction of the camp and adjoining roads. The job at Morotai was made difficult not only by the threat of enemy bombers, but also by the poor living conditions. Tropical weather, together with red, dusty soil meant that the construction workers were almost covered with red dirt which, when mixed with their perspiration and grime from the machinery, caked onto their clothes and bodies. Meals were dull and always consisted of a mixture of meat hash, potato and carrots, and the dining room was comprised of chairs made from boxes in the open air.

Despite these hardships, the Squadron brought the Pitoe strip up to operational status within a month of landing, and after five weeks commenced drainage construction at the Wama strip. Midway through November the unit relieved 3 Airfield Construction Squadron, which had been completing the taxiways of Pitoe and Wama strips. On 21 November 1944, the two strips were attacked by Japanese fighters, which left several fires burning and debris and craters on the taxiways and hardstanding areas. This damage was quickly repaired by the Squadron, with little or no inconvenience to operations. Four days later, the Squadron took over all construction tasks of air units in the immediate area. During this time, the unit continued airfield construction

and road making and assisted other units in the construction of the various facilities. In addition to the quartermasters' store, work commenced on 27 Air Stores Park unloading dock, a pump was installed for the 30 Squadron bore, and the unit sawmill was established, producing 3200 feet of dressed timber on its first day.

Another Japanese air attack on 11 January 1945 caused only minor damage. In January work continued on new buildings and roads, as well as repairs and maintenance, and at the end of the month the Squadron began stockpiling coral to allow for the resurfacing of Wama strip. By mid-February the strip had been completely regraded, with additional loads of coral being delivered to other RAAF units and some American units in the area.

During the next six months, the Squadron remained in location, servicing the needs of surrounding air and support units. In addition, a detachment of 140 personnel deployed to Balikpapan to assist in drainage and construction works.

On 15 September 1945 the Commanding Officer and a party of airmen participated in a parade on Morotai at which the surrender of the General Commanding the Japanese Second Army was received. Three months later, on 6 December 1945, 14 Airfield Construction Squadron was disbanded on Morotai.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

24 August 1943	—Flight Lieutenant L. Chesterfield
1 November 1943	—Flight Lieutenant T.R. Nossiter
22 February 1944	—Squadron Leader L. Chesterfield
2 September 1944	—Squadron Leader T.R. Nossiter

1 BASE MEDICAL STORE

CHRONOLOGY

- 1 September 1942 —established at Albury, NSW
9 July 1946 —Store disbanded

NARRATIVE

On 1 September 1942, 1 Base Medical Store was formed at Albury, New South Wales. It housed all medical supplies for RAAF units and squadrons both within Australia and to the north—everything from beds and X-ray equipment to dressings and pharmaceuticals. The first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader D.P. Felton and the original establishment figure was three officers and 20 airmen. On 8 October 1942 the Store was placed under the command of 4 Maintenance Group.

All personnel were instructed in fire fighting at the fire station at Albury. This was because of the possibility of a fire in the store. Overcrowding of stores was always a problem. A shortage of wood for packing of equipment caused great concern also. In November 1942 a building was constructed to house a tablet-manufacturing plant to assist with a more efficient distribution of minor drugs.

At the cessation of hostilities the store was disbanded on 9 July 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 20 October 1942 —Squadron Leader D.P. Felton
12 July 1944 —Squadron Leader C.W. Fitton
10 December 1945 —Flight Lieutenant R. Patrick
30 April 1946 —Flying Officer E.H. Wheeler
1 July 1946 —Flying Officer K.E. Hartley

1 BASE PERSONNEL STAFF OFFICE

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| 30 June 1942 | —formed in Townsville, Qld |
| 8 October 1944 | —Office ceased to exist |

NARRATIVE

On 30 June 1942, 1 Base Personnel Staff Office was formed in Townsville, North Queensland. The functions of the unit were to control postings of personnel in the North-Eastern Area; maintain records of service for officers and airmen; promulgate and distribute all unit personnel occurrence reports; and other duties as directed by the Air Board. The first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader A.T. Cowdell.

At any one time the Office was responsible for up to 15 000 personnel. Transit camps were set up in Townsville to accommodate personnel and there were often outbreaks of dengue fever because of the overcrowding. Some of the units and squadrons that came under the auspices of the Office were 82 Squadron, 61 Operational Base Unit, 29 Air Stores Park, 20 Medical Clearance Station, 120 Squadron and 112 Fighter Control Unit.

By January 1944, the number of losses within personnel increased—primarily due to postings out on medical grounds, aircrew secondments and attachments to courses.

In October 1944 the Office ceased to exist as a separate Air Force unit, but it continued to function as a section of Headquarters North-Eastern Command.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 30 November 1942 | —Squadron Leader A.T. Cowdell |
| 10 February 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant J.P. Corrigan |
| 20 September 1943 | —Squadron Leader E.A. Montigue |

2 BASE PERSONNEL STAFF OFFICE

CHRONOLOGY

8 June 1942	—formed at Birdum, NT
29 March 1943	—moved to Adelaide River, NT
10 May 1944	—moved to 54 Mile area
9 October 1944	—Office disbanded

NARRATIVE

2 Base Personnel Staff Office formed at Birdum in the Northern Territory on 8 June 1942 to control the posting of personnel in North-Western Area units; maintain records of service for officers and airmen within the area; promulgate and distribute all unit personnel occurrence reports for this area; and other duties as detailed in Air Board Orders.

The Office was a lodger unit at Operational Base Birdum and its first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader A.T. Cowdell. Units taken care of by the Office included 9 Stores Depot; 14 Aircraft Repair Unit; 8 Mobile Works Squadron; 18, 12 and 457 Squadrons; 1 Medical Receiving Station; and 53 Operational Base Unit. The re-organisation of Headquarters North-Western Area, brought about by the formation of 24 Base Wing, 44 Radio Wing and 11 Signals Unit, and also the arrival of new units into the area, all made December 1942 very busy. It was possible however to release a considerable number of 'time expired' personnel during this period when postings into the area exceeded postings out.

On 29 March 1943, the Office moved to Adelaide River and was completely functional again on 1 April.

On 10 May 1944 the Office was moved to 54 Mile area camp. Once again, the Office remained fully operational throughout the move and was housed in temporary accommodation whilst new buildings were erected.

The Office was disbanded on 9 October 1944, its functions became a Headquarters responsibility and the 100 personnel were transferred.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

8 June 1942	—Squadron Leader A.T. Cowdell
19 September 1942	—Squadron Leader C.C. Degenhardt
14 January 1944	—Squadron Leader J.G. Burns

5 BASE PERSONNEL STAFF OFFICE

CHRONOLOGY

21 October 1942	—established at Edgecliff, NSW
23 January 1943	—moved to Townsville, Qld
13 February 1943	—moved to Port Moresby, New Guinea
7 June 1943	—moved to Milne Bay
8 October 1944	—Office ceased to exist

NARRATIVE

On 21 October 1942, 5 Base Personnel Staff Office was formed at Edgecliff, New South Wales, as a separate unit under the command of Headquarters Eastern Area. As with other base personnel staff units, it was responsible for various units within Headquarters with regard to staffing, maintaining service records, distributing personnel occurrence reports and other duties as detailed by Air Board Orders. The Office was a lodger unit of 5 Maintenance Group and its first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader J.H.G. Guest.

On 29 December 1942, an instruction was received from RAAF Headquarters that 5 Base Personnel Staff Office was to cease to function within 5 Maintenance Group and move to Townsville, North Queensland, with a view to moving to Port Moresby in New Guinea. Personnel departed by train from Sydney, with equipment to follow by goods train, and arrived in Townsville on 23 January 1943. There was a shortage of service accommodation for officers, so on arrival they were told that they had to live out. The unit occupied a portion of the premises of 1 Base Personnel Staff Office, where it commenced the takeover of files and documents of personnel and units in New Guinea. The handover was completed by 31 January 1943 and the unit stood by in readiness for the move to New Guinea.

Twenty-two members of the Office left Townsville for Port Moresby by a Qantas flying boat on 13 February 1943. Stationery and equipment had already arrived and on 18 February the unit commenced operation. Some of the RAAF units that were administered by the Office included 21, 23, 24 Squadrons; 3 Medical Station; and 5 Mobile Works Unit.

In June 1943 the unit moved to Milne Bay, where it had to operate with depleted staff for a few days pending the arrival of the balance of

its personnel, who were unable to proceed by air from Port Moresby due to bad weather. Much of the accommodation was built by personnel of the unit along with local labour, but the Office did not remain long in Milne Bay.

In September 1944 the unit transferred to Nadzab, and by October was located in Madang. Headquarters Northern Command assumed responsibility for the administrative functions of 5 Base Personnel Staff Office and the Office ceased to exist on 8 October 1944.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

21 October 1942	—Squadron Leader J.H.G. Guest
10 February 1943	—Squadron Leader A.T. Cowdell
21 September 1943	—Squadron Leader J.P. Corrigan
9 August 1944	—Flight Lieutenant G.M. Gillespie

1 MALARIAL CONTROL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1 September 1943 | —formed at Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea |
| 14 October 1944 | —moved to Madang, Papua New Guinea |
| 21 January 1946 | —disbanded at Madang |

NARRATIVE

1 Malarial Control Unit was formed at Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea (PNG), on 1 September 1943 with a total of 45 personnel. It was divided into sections and each sent to various areas in PNG for mosquito spraying to fight malarial and dengue fever outbreaks. Headquarters and 1 Section were moved to Madang on 14 October 1944 with a detachment to Nadzab. 2 Section was located at Milne Bay with a detachment at Goodenough Island. 3 Section was located at Aitape.

At Madang, the Unit took over from the 2/1st Australian Army Malarial Control Unit, which had completed the initial drainage and maintenance program for the area. The section's task in the area was the continuing maintenance and installation of new drains when necessary.

Milne Bay proved a problem area for malarial control as there was bad drainage and the area was constantly wet. The Army had already started to drain the area and the Unit when formed carried on from there. Milne Bay was also used as a training centre for hygiene sergeants and other malaria control personnel.

Beauforts as well as Tiger Moths were fitted out with bay tanks for aerial spraying and the Unit also used hand spraying methods with native helpers. A Unit member, Flight Sergeant R.R. Harris, invented a hand sprayer for DDT which, when filled with solution, weighed only 2 lbs and was able to keep a sprayer going for a whole day.

1 Malarial Control Unit was disbanded on 21 January 1946 in Madang.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 1 August 1943 | —Flying Officer T.H. Strong |
| 10 October 1943 | —Pilot Officer G.F. Gee |
| 15 May 1945 | —Flying Officer T.H. Burgess |

2 MALARIAL CONTROL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 22 November 1943 —formed at Werribee, Vic.
1 January 1944 —detachment sent to Nadzab, Papua
New Guinea
11 July 1944 —Unit operating out of Noemfoor
12 December 1945 —nucleus of Unit moved to Wagga Wagga,
NSW
30 June 1946 —Unit disbanded at Laverton, Vic.

NARRATIVE

2 Malarial Control Unit was formed at Werribee on 22 November 1943 with a total of 45 personnel. In January 1944 a detachment was sent to Nadzab, Papua New Guinea, to take over from 1 Malarial Control Unit. The Unit was divided into three separate sections and a headquarters. A detachment was sent to Hollandia and later a detachment sent to Tadjji Airfield. When 10 Operational Group moved from Tadjji to Noemfoor Island late in June 1944, the Tadjji detachment moved with it. They were joined on 11 July 1944 by the rest of Headquarters Section, and by early August the whole of the Unit was operating at Noemfoor.

As with 1 Malarial Control Unit, spraying and survey of mosquito breeding were carried out to arrest the spread of malaria and dengue fever, carrying on the work of Australian Army units and American Service units.

The nucleus of the Unit was moved at the end of hostilities to Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, in December 1945. When the Unit returned it moved to Laverton, Victoria, and was disbanded in June 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 1 November 1943 —Pilot Officer D. Gilmore
1 August 1944 —Pilot Officer G.F. Gee
19 October 1944 —Pilot Officer G.J. Snowball

3 MALARIAL CONTROL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 5 April 1944 | —formed at Ransford, Vic. |
| 30 October 1945 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

3 Malarial Control Unit was formed at Ransford, Victoria, in April 1944 with 44 personnel. It was then moved to Sattler in the Northern Territory.

In June 1944 a mobile laboratory was established for entomological field studies in connection with malaria control. One of the first tasks was to do a survey of the Sattler area and an oiling program was instituted and drainage of swampy areas completed.

As with the other malarial control units, the Unit was split up into headquarters and sections, the sections being outposted to various areas of the Northern Territory such as Katherine, Elizabeth River, Humpty Doo, Bees Creek, the Darwin area and even Melville Island.

DDT was also introduced as a spraying medium. The sections were involved not only in spraying and surveys but also in inspections of bases, including American units and deserted Army camps. They filled in grease traps and removed debris and garbage. In the Darwin area, they filled in bomb craters which would fill with water when it rained, to prevent them from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The unit was disbanded in October 1945 with the ending of hostilities.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 5 May 1944 | —Pilot Officer M.E. Griffiths |
| 1 July 1945 | —Flight Lieutenant G.F. Gee |

1 MEDICAL AIR EVACUATION TRANSPORT UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 3 March 1944 | —Unit formed at Sandgate, Qld |
| 12 May 1945 | —moved to Lae, Papua New Guinea |
| 15 February 1946 | —transferred to 40 Operational Base Unit |

NARRATIVE

1 Medical Air Evacuation Transport Unit was formed at Sandgate on 3 March 1944 with six officers, 25 nurses, one warrant officer, four flight sergeants, 23 sergeants, eight corporals and 24 other ranks.

On 6 August 1944 an aircraft from the Unit carrying 13 patients went down on the ocean off Cape Dijar in Dutch New Guinea due to an engine failure. All patients and crew escaped safely.

On 1 October 1944 the Unit took over full control of medical air evacuations in New Guinea from the American Air Evacuation Squadron. The Unit now covered the area from Biak in the north-west to Milne Bay in the south-east and also Momote in the Admiralty Islands.

On 1 May 1945 the Unit completed its move to Lae. By 1 September the Unit had carried 14 209 patients since its commencement, but work decreased considerably after the cessation of hostilities in August.

On 15 November 1945, Sister V.B. Sheah lost her life when an aircraft crashed between Jacquinot Bay and Rabaul.

Evacuation to the mainland formed the bulk of the work in December 1945, by which stage inter-island evacuation was drawing to a close, and also in January 1946 due to the transfer of personnel of disbanding Army units who happened to be in hospital at the time of disbandment.

The Unit transferred to 40 Operational Base Unit on 15 February 1946 with a nucleus consisting of the Commanding Officer, four RAF nursing sisters, four medical orderlies and one medical clerk.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 26 August 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant F.W. Kiel |
| 16 March 1945 | —Flight Lieutenant G.F. Salter |
| 28 May 1945 | —Squadron Leader R. Greenlees |
| September 1945 | —Flight Lieutenant Felstead |

2 MEDICAL AIR EVACUATION TRANSPORT UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 2 August 1945 —formed at Morotai
10 September 1945 —advance party for Singapore and Kuching
evacuations commenced their journeys
November 1945 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

2 Medical Air Evacuation Transport Unit was formed at Morotai on 2 August 1945 under the command of Flight Lieutenant Potter.

The Unit's work consisted primarily of the air evacuation of patients from various Army and Air Force hospitals and, where necessary, Allied forces. Patients were shuttled from Labuan, Tarakan and Balikpapan to Morotai and, if considered necessary by respective medical heads of departments, were later escorted to Townsville. Members of the Unit assumed responsibility for patients as they entered the aircraft from service ambulances, and relinquished responsibility once patients were taken from the planes on completion of journeys.

The cessation of hostilities in August 1945 necessitated the early repatriation of large numbers of prisoners of war and Army hospital casualties. Therefore, it was decided to substantially increase the strength of the Unit. At one period there were 30 sisters and 32 medical orderlies on strength. The Unit was to cover the four main spheres of action: Malaya (including Burma, Thailand and Sumatra), Borneo, Morotai and the Philippines.

On 9 September 1945 advice was received that a Dakota aircraft which was used as an air ambulance was overdue. As at 1 October there was still no news of the missing aircraft, which was later sighted by an ASR Catalina and the survivors were finally picked up by crash launch. On 10 September an advance party proceeded to Labuan for the evacuation of prisoners of war from the Kuching camp and an advance party for the evacuation of prisoners of war in the Singapore area left Morotai on the same day. Flight Lieutenant V.W. Potter, who was to act as Officer

Commanding Detachment, accompanied the party. The Unit detachment arrived at Singapore on 12 September 1945.

Wing Commander J.A. Game (Staff Medical Officer) co-ordinated the air evacuation in all areas and conducted overall policy and liaison with all the Services, including the British.

On 13 September, 95 Australians were evacuated from Singapore to Labuan and on the 14th evacuations into Singapore commenced with the airlift of 121 prisoners of war from Malaya and Thailand. Evacuations from Sumatra commenced on 16 September—30 women internees, including 28 Australian Army nurses, were recovered. During the next five days 1811 prisoners of war were evacuated from Sumatra, Thailand and Malaya. On 22 September a large number of Australians were evacuated from Phet Buri, including RAAF personnel mainly from 1 Squadron who were captured in Singapore and Java. Evacuation of prisoners of war from all areas continued throughout the month and in early October. On 16 October 1945 the Australian Army (Changi Reception Group) notified the Unit that all prisoner of war evacuations by air had been completed.

On 11 October 1945 the Commander in Chief, South-East Asia Command, Lord Mountbatten, visited RAAF personnel in the Singapore area and expressed his appreciation of the work done by the RAAF detachment in the evacuation of prisoners of war from Sumatra, Malaya, Burma and Thailand. He made special reference to the excellent work carried out by 2 Medical Air Evacuation Transport Unit, noting that the greater percentage of the evacuations had been carried out by the RAAF.

The Unit ceased to function as of 12 November 1945 and was completely disbanded on 21 November 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

2 August 1945	—Flight Lieutenant V.W. Potter
9 September 1945	—Squadron Leader F.W. Kiel
1 November 1945	—Flight Lieutenant V.W. Potter

20 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

- 7 October 1943 —Central Sick Quarters, Townsville,
re-named 20 Medical Clearing Station
- 12 April 1944 —reformed at 1ED, Melbourne
- 6 May 1944 —arrived in Townsville
- 5 January 1945 —moved to Tadjji, New Guinea
- 14 January 1946 —Station disbanded

NARRATIVE

Central Sick Quarters, Townsville, was re-named 20 Medical Clearing Station (20MCS) on 7 October 1943. The hospital was able, under emergency conditions, to accommodate 100 patients.

After reforming at 1 Embarkation Depot, Melbourne, on 12 April 1944, the unit was stood down from 29 April to 1 May and began the move back to Townsville on 2 May. After 98 hours on the train, personnel arrived in Townsville on 6 May and began work on the camp site opposite Currajong Hospital on 10 May. Stores arrived by rail on 14 May and personnel were housed at 1RPP until the move to the new camp site was completed on 22 May 1944.

By 5 July all personnel were engaged in packing, marking and strapping supplies in preparation for the move forward, and on 9 July the last of the unit members had commenced a defence course. A trip was arranged to Mount Spec on 29 July 1944, to complete jungle warfare training. All members of the unit also completed armament training and instruction in bayonet fighting and care of rifles during July. The unit carpenter and a group of men made frames for fly-proofing wards in the new location, and a portable dispensary was also put together. Personnel from 14RSU manufactured stretcher fittings for the weapon carriers. The unit was by this time fully equipped for operational duties.

In conjunction with North-Eastern Area policy, competitive games, route marches, swimming, hiking and bayonet drill were all carried out by unit personnel. On 9 August the parade ground was gravelled and fire breaks made around the tent area. By night on 23–24 August 1944, equipment was loaded into trucks and taken to the wharf for onwards shipment.

During September 1944, personnel were waiting anxiously to move forward. The Commanding Officer reported that morale, discipline and fitness continued to be of a high standard, despite disappointments, delays and false alarms.

Vaccination of unit personnel was completed by 24 October and 28 Medical Clearing Station became a lodger unit at 20MCS on 8 November 1944. Personnel were sent in small groups on recreation leave during November.

On 16 November unit personnel and equipment moved to the Currajong site previously occupied by 3 Medical Receiving Station. This move was appreciated by all, but on 8 December the unit received notification that it was to move back to the old camp site.

The Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader Munro, was posted to 2 Personnel Depot for discharge on 1 January 1945, just two days before the unit received notification of its move to Tadjj, New Guinea.

After arrival in New Guinea, the Army Works Unit installed water service to wards and showers on 11 January, and the orderly room tent was erected and operational by 16 January. The dispensary and medical ward were set up and X-ray and pathology sections completed by the 18th. Very heavy rain fell during this time, and the Whittaker Bridge, en route to the Detail Issue Depot where rations were received, was washed away by floods. On 30 January 1945, showers and latrines for dysentery patients were completed. The unit was deemed to be functioning fully and efficiently by 31 January, when the first operation was performed in the theatre at Tadjj.

During February 1945, a considerable number of patients were admitted to the unit, with eight being evacuated to the mainland. By April, the X-ray unit was out of order, and the unit was dependent upon 2/11 Australian General Hospital for all X-ray services. During June 1945, an additional mobile dental section became a lodger unit of 20MCS. Then on 6 July, 7 Mobile Dental Section also set up as a lodger unit.

Celebrations after the signing of the peace treaty on 15 August 1945 were both orderly and limited, and the unit stood down. With the cessation of hostilities the work load lessened, so other activities were organised. During September 1945, supplies of fresh food to the unit were non-existent, and considerable difficulty was experienced in preparing patients' diets. On 20 November campaign ribbons were issued, with the Pacific Star being in short supply. By Christmas 1945, the number of patients had dropped from 45, two months before, to four.

After a proposing signal was issued on New Years Day, 20 Medical Clearing Station was finally disbanded on 14 January 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

7 November 1943	—Squadron Leader J. Hughes
12 April 1944	—Squadron Leader F.V. Munro
5 February 1945	—Squadron Leader H.M. Webber
1 August 1945	—Squadron Leader J.F. Ziegler
1 December 1945	—Flight Lieutenant A.J. Gumley

21 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

- 1 October 1943 —formed at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
- 6 November 1944 —took over strip duty at Jackson's Strip
- 1 August 1945 —Station disbanded

NARRATIVE

21 Medical Clearing Station was formed at Port Moresby on 1 October 1943, and was 60 per cent operational at that time. The unit transferred to a new building on 24 October and medical and dysentery wards, kitchen, nurses quarters and offices were completed, enabling the unit to be 80 per cent operational. The operating theatre was completed on 29 October. On 1 November 1943, a flight lieutenant medical officer and 12 medical orderlies were assigned to the unit for training with the USAAF for air transport and medical evacuation duties.

The 33-bed surgical ward was completed on 11 November, and patients were admitted. On 1 February 1944, the Sergeants' Mess was completed, followed by the completion of quarters for WAAAF personnel on 19 February.

Northern Command Rear Headquarters decided on 24 April to post the medical orderlies of 45 Operational Base Unit (OBU) to 21MCS, with the result that 21MCS became responsible for the medical attention of 45OBU personnel. During May, 147 patients were admitted and 13 major and eight minor operations performed. 21MCS also took over responsibility for the medical evacuation of patients from Port Moresby to the mainland, and 58 patients were evacuated by air during the month.

During June 1944 128 patients were evacuated to the mainland and 255 were admitted to hospital. An extra clerk, carpenter and general hand were posted in, but medical orderlies were now in short supply. The Commanding Officer reported that it was difficult to operate the hospital with such small staff numbers. The carpenter, with the help of general hands and natives, constructed a garage and workshop, carpenter's workshop, canteen and post office, and a small equipment store during July. As well, 45OBU and 40 Squadron were based at 21MCS for medical

attention, and the Commanding Officer was also the Senior Medical Officer (SMO) at 74 Wing Headquarters.

On 10 October, it was agreed to admit sick US personnel to the unit when American hospitals in the area ceased to function. The average number of patients in hospital was 20 per day, seven of whom were Americans.

On 6 November, the Unit took over strip duty at Jackson's Strip, with one medical orderly being on duty each day. The PMO, Wing Commander Greenham, arrived from Madang and inspected the unit on 8 November. He gave instructions that steps be taken to make the unit completely mobile. During November, there were 84 admissions and 92 discharges from hospital, with a daily average of 18 patients, of which eight were from other Services, mostly Americans.

Advice was received on 24 July 1945 that the unit was to cease functioning with a view to disbandment, before being incorporated as Station Sick Quarters of RAAF Station Port Moresby. On 1 August, 21MCS disbanded and ceased to exist as a separate unit. All equipment was transferred to RAAF Station Port Moresby.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1 October 1943	—Squadron Leader H.M. Webber
29 January 1945	—Squadron Leader C.C. Greenwell
17 March 1944	—Flight Lieutenant J.B. Curtis
5 July 1945	—Squadron Leader L.J.T. Murphy

22 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

- 20 October 1943 —formed at Townsville, Qld
- 19 February 1944 —arrived at Lae
- 22 April 1944 —landed at Tadj
- 13 July 1944 —arrived at Noemfoor
- 20 January 1945 —main party moved to Biak
- 11 June 1945 —reached Labuan Island
- 22 November 1945 —last entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

22 Medical Clearing Station (22MCS) was formed at Townsville on 20 October 1943 and work commenced on the erection of huts and grading of roads on 1 November. Unit personnel were messing at 20 Medical Clearing Station, pending the receipt of barracks and messing equipment. By the end of December 1943 the unit was able to function in a medical, but not surgical, capacity.

On 3 January 1944 personnel started packing equipment and on 5 January warning was received of a move in the near future. The Commanding Officer visited the new site in New Guinea from 7 to 10 January, with 22MCS now ready to move at a moment's notice.

The *Anson Burlingame* sailed on 11 February with the unit's equipment and two unit personnel. Remaining unit personnel departed on the *Katoomba* on 13 February, with both ships arriving in Lae on 19 February. The Commanding Officer visited Saidor on 28 February to select a site for 22MCS. However, after the unit lodged with 6 Mobile Works Squadron on 13 March, the move to Saidor was cancelled. On 8 April 1944, 22MCS sailed from Lae to Cape Cretin, then to Black's Beach (where a trial landing was carried out), Cape Cretin, Buna, Cape Cretin and finally Tadj. The unit landed at Tadj on 22 April, two hours after the invasion troops, and on 29 April proceeded to the hospital site which had been cleared on the beach.

May 1944 was taken up with clearing and construction and on 9 June the 400th patient was admitted to hospital. On 10 June the hospital admitted the greatest number of patients in one day—106—but on 20 June the unit received instructions to suspend operations as of 22 June.

22MCS left Tadjj by sea on 6 July 1944, arriving at Noemfoor on 13 July. Personnel waited until 19 July for road access to a new site—5 miles out in unoccupied territory. The first patient was admitted on 24 July and the 500th on 3 August. The air ambulance began operating on 21 August, when five patients were evacuated to the mainland.

Warning of a projected move was received on 10 December 1944, with an advance party leaving for the new site at Biak on 28 December and the main party moving on 20 January 1945. 22MCS was able to function efficiently by 23 January and was fully operational by 26 January, after receiving 47 patients from 5MRS.

Several bombs were dropped during a surprise air raid on 22 March but there were no casualties. On 10 April training in defence began for all personnel—this consisted of instruction in the use and care of rifles, SMG and revolvers. On 20 April preparations were in hand for a projected move, with the unit becoming inoperative for a while from the 30th. Some of the advance party departed for Morotai by corvette on 1 May, with the remainder of the advance party and equipment leaving by aircraft on the 4th. The main party left Biak for Morotai by Landing Ship Tanks (LST) on 8 May 1945.

After staging at Morotai, the unit embarked on an LST on 31 May en route to the scene of 'Oboe 6'. 22MCS reached Labuan Island on 11 June, immediately becoming operational. On 12 June, the camp was cleared and a ward erected. The first operation was carried out on 15 June and a record number of patients—169—were hospitalised on 20 June. During July, operations were temporarily suspended to allow for re-organisation and improvement of the camp drainage system. 22MCS became operational again on 2 August 1945.

On 29 October, 5 Medical Receiving Station closed down in preparation for its return to the mainland, and 15 patients were transferred to 22MCS. On 22 November 1945, 62 Airfield Construction Wing disbanded, and 22MCS came directly under the control of 1st Tactical Air Force RAAF. This was the last entry in the diary.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

20 October 1943	—Squadron Leader S.W. Dobell-Brown
30 August 1944	—Squadron Leader A.W. Raymond
4 September 1945	—Flight Lieutenant D.D. Letham
23 November 1945	—Flight Lieutenant D.A. Brown

23 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

16 November 1943	—formed at Werribee, Vic.
11 December 1943	—arrived at Coominya, Qld
28 January 1944	—arrived at Lae
30 June 1944	—arrived at Tuon Bay
8 July 1944	—arrived at Noemfoor
26 December 1944	—proceeded to Morotai
7 May 1945	—arrived at Tarakan Island
30 May 1945	—detachment to Sanga-Sanga
October 1945	—last entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

23 Medical Clearing Station (23MCS) was formed at 'The Manor', Werribee, Victoria, on 16 November 1943, along with 24 Medical Clearing Station. Unit personnel worked long hours during November, transporting, packing and checking equipment.

On 8 December, the unit plus equipment sailed from Melbourne, arriving at Coominya, Queensland, on 11 December. The unit camp site was about 2 miles from the railway station and on the night of 14 December, a fierce storm all but flattened the camp. Tents were badly torn, and extensive damage caused to two prefabricated huts and unit equipment. From 17 to 28 December, most personnel were employed repacking, checking and transporting equipment from the stores depots.

23MCS personnel arrived at Yeerongpilly on 14 January and embarked on the Liberty ship *Edward D. Baker*, sailing via Townsville to arrive at Lae on 28 January 1944. After travelling by Army transport to Nadzab, personnel spent several days guarding equipment and searching for goods lost in transit. By 2 February the unit was fully operational, with 32 patients. On 3 April the station became independent, with the installation of a lighting system and full facilities for cooking and messing of staff and hospital patients.

On 20 June, all equipment was transported to Lae for loading onto another Liberty ship in preparation for the onward move to 'Table Tennis'—Noemfoor Island. Personnel departed Nadzab and embarked at Lae on 25 June, arriving at Tuon Bay on 30 June. On 4 and 5 July,

personnel and equipment were transferred from ship to Landing Ship Tank (LST), arriving at Noemfoor on 8 July 1944. The camp site was cleared by 5 Airfield Construction Squadron on 9 and 10 July, and by 11 July 23MCS was fully operational. The unit functioned smoothly during the ensuing period, with admissions for the month varying between 111 and 171. Then, on 24 December 1944, 23MCS ceased to function pending another move forward.

On 26 December, the larger portion of equipment and personnel left by aircraft for Morotai. The kitchen and messes were erected at once, but there was much clearing and tree felling to be done before any more building could be started. The unit was fully operational on 8 January 1945.

From 21 to 26 March Mr Troughton, a biologist from Sydney Museum and the Scientific Liaison Bureau, visited the unit to investigate the animal reservoirs of the mite concerned with the transmission of scrub typhus.

On 4 April 1945, official notification was received for 23MCS to prepare for onward move and on 30 April 23MCS ceased to function as preparations were under way for a move forward. The first party embarked on HMAS *Manoora* on 4 May, arriving at Tarakan on 7 May. A building was finally allotted to the unit and, as the situation was somewhat precarious, 23MCS was advised by the Army to post guards at night.

On 9 May, work commenced on clearing the ruins of the site, which was a portion of a burnt-out Dutch hospital situated on the north-east fringe of the town. On 30 May a detachment of 12 men, including the Commanding Officer, eight medical orderlies, a laboratory technician and clerk medical embarked for Sanga-Sanga, arriving on 2 June. This detachment became operational on 6 June and returned to 23MCS on the 25th.

The Unit History Record ends in October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

19 November 1943	—Squadron Leader Munro
26 November 1943	—Squadron Leader A. McGlynn
28 January 1945	—Squadron Leader R.G. Weaver

24 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

16 November 1943	—formed at Werribee, Vic.
14 December 1943	—arrived in Townsville, Qld
28 December 1943	—advance party to Nadzab
12 March 1944	—moved to Cape Gloucester
22 April 1944	—11 Mobile Dental Section attached to 24MCS
9 June 1944	—moved to Hollandia
8–13 August 1944	—moved to Noemfoor
1 May 1945	—arrived at Morotai
5 June 1945	—set sail for Labuan
10 October 1945	—Station disbanded

NARRATIVE

On 16 November 1943, Squadron Leader C.A. Frew arrived at 'The Manor', Werribee, Victoria, with instructions to form and equip 24 Medical Clearing Station (24MCS) along with 23MCS. The first load of equipment arrived on 19 November. The Mobile Dental Unit was in operation at 24MCS from 23 to 30 November and all personnel were made dentally fit and then kitted out for the tropics. The last load of equipment arrived on 30 November and, after packing and loading, was despatched to Brisbane on 2 December.

Unit personnel arrived in Brisbane on 10 December, where they proceeded to Kalinga staging camp. Personnel then left Brisbane on 12 December, arriving in Townsville on 14 December, and proceeded to 1 Replacement Personnel Pool. The advance party of one carpenter general and two general hands were seconded to the Works Wing, and flew to Nadzab on 28 December 1943.

24MCS left in two detachments for Nadzab and lodged with 4ACS on 9–10 January 1944. As the first site selected for a camp was unsuitable, a new site in a palm grove was selected on the 13th. All living and sick quarters were completed by 2 February, and the first patient was admitted on 3 February, followed by 42 patients the next day.

Orders were given on 10 March to evacuate all patients to 23MCS or their units, pack all equipment and proceed by air to Cape Gloucester.

On 12 March, a camp site at Cape Gloucester was chosen and equipment moved with transport provided by US Marines. The unit was operational and the first patient admitted on 14 March.

On 22 April, 11 Mobile Dental Section was attached to 24MCS and by 30 April, preparations for another move were under way. During the early part of May 1944 patients were evacuated to their units, or to US 135th Medical Clearing Company, and stores and equipment packed. The unit was ready to leave at four hours notice on the 18th, but the move was cancelled on the next day, and patients re-admitted.

24MCS moved to Hollandia on 9 June, becoming operational by 12 June; then to Noemfoor between 8 and 13 August, and was fully operational by 14 August. On 4 September penicillin was used for the first time in the unit and on 7 October an emergency ward was completed. A pathology section was also built and became operational during the month.

During December 1944, the occupied bed rate rose to a maximum of 44 on 24 December. At this time, 24MCS was looking after about 3000 personnel. During January 1945, the unit experienced its busiest time since arriving at Noemfoor; 24MCS was the only medical clearing station operating in the area. A further move by the unit was deferred twice during January, partly due to heavy patient commitments.

24MCS left Noemfoor by the Liberty ship *Charles M. Russell* on 26 April and sailed via Biak, where it joined a convoy before proceeding to Morotai, arriving on 1 May 1945. 24MCS set sail in convoy from Morotai to Labuan on 5 June, after spending a wet night in the open on the beach. It was with great difficulty that a suitable site for the unit was found at Labuan. Clearing by bulldozer could not be completed as a gun battery was still in action close by. A full guard was set up as 24MCS was on the perimeter further up the north-east coast than any other RAAF unit. The hospital was operational by 22 June, but the dispensary had to be pulled down quickly as the gun battery began to fire over one corner of the hospital.

On 28 June, 5 Dental Section arrived to lodge with 24MCS. Heavy rains had made the road to the unit impassable on 8 July, and patients either walked the last 200 yards or were carried on stretchers. Water carts could not get through, so staff washed in the creek and patients were sponged.

During August 1945, the unit worked under makeshift conditions, with a large number of patients and small number of staff. On 27 August

it was announced that 24MCS would be part of the RAAF force proceeding to Japan, and a call went out for volunteers for service there. The unit did not deploy to Japan, but remained fully operational during September, providing hospital facilities for units of 81 Wing, before disbanding on 10 October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

16 November 1943	—Squadron Leader C.A. Frew
28 March 1944	—Squadron Leader E.D.M. Ryan
28 July 1945	—Flight Lieutenant M.V. Clarke

25 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 17 February 1944 | —formed at 1 Embarkation Depot, Melbourne, Vic. |
| 8 April 1944 | —moved to Darwin, NT |
| 31 January 1945 | —arrived at Morotai |
| 30 June 1945 | —final entry in Unit History Record |

NARRATIVE

25 Medical Clearing Station (25MCS) was formed in Melbourne on 17 February 1944, with personnel quartered and kitted out for tropical service at 1 Embarkation Depot. On 25 February, working and packing parties for the unit equipment were arranged at 1 Stores Depot and 2 Transportation and Movements Office. A check of next of kin data and identity discs was conducted on 5 March 1944, and the balance of tropical gear issued. Red Cross supplies were received on 9 March 1944, and were packed away.

On 8 April, 25MCS moved to Darwin, with personnel established at the unit site at Sattler on 21 April. On 3 May, prefab huts were prepared for the operating theatre, and the dispensary was completed. During May, unit personnel undertook a six-day course in aerodrome defence, including jungle and bush craft. Practice in removing and erecting tents was also held. Regular route marches were conducted in the surrounding bush, and officers and senior NCOs were instructed in the Malayan language. Personnel also attended lectures on intelligence and aircraft recognition.

During July, with the unit still in the process of formation, personnel took part in a ceremonial parade at Sattler airfield, and weekly rifle practice on the range. They were also instructed in the netting of fish in tidal waters. The average bed occupancy rate for the month was two per day. On 22 August personnel packed their tents and equipment and moved to 1 Medical Receiving Station, where they joined the roster of duties. The unit was now able to move into operations at short notice.

On 18 January 1945, 25MCS personnel sailed by troop transport from Darwin, arriving at Morotai on 31 January. Preparation of the camp site continued throughout February and March and the first operation was

performed in the newly completed theatre on 21 April. At the end of April 1945 patients were admitted from 23 and 26 Medical Clearing Stations, as these units had ceased to function in preparation for moves forward. As 25MCS had no laboratory equipment or technician, cases requiring pathology investigation were being referred to 5 Medical Receiving Station (5MRS) at this time.

The numbers of nursing and domestic staff at the unit increased from 22 May to keep pace with the ever rising occupied bed rate. On 30 May, a request was sent to the Matron-in-Chief, RAAFNS, for six nursing sisters to be posted to 25MCS, and work was begun on a compound and quarters for them. By the end of May 1945, 25MCS was the only hospital unit operating at Morotai. The unit was assisted in the hospitalisation of minor cases by utilising the sick quarters of 14 Airfield Construction Squadron (20 beds) and 34 Squadron (10 beds).

The policy of 25MCS now included the hospitalisation of personnel from units remaining on Morotai, and the evacuation of patients from more forward areas. Additionally, the Commanding Officer of 25MCS, Squadron Leader L.L. Edwards, was at this time the Senior Medical Officer of both 80 Wing and Morotai.

On 19 June 1945 11 guards were detached from Headquarters 80 Wing to guard the unit and on the same day all personnel from 27MCS, staging through Morotai, were accommodated at 25MCS. On 25 June, six nursing sisters, intended for 5MRS, arrived, and it was decided that they would stay until 5MRS was ready for them to move on to Labuan.

There were no further entries in the Unit History Record.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

21 February 1944	—Squadron Leader E.A. Eddy
26 May 1944	—Squadron Leader I. Cuming
26 March 1945	—Squadron Leader L.L. Edwards

26 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

27 February 1944	—formed at Kiriwina
9 March 1944	—disembarked at Milne Bay
16 March 1944	—arrived at Los Negros
27 July 1944	—operational at Tadjj
18 September 1944	—forward party landed on Morotai
7 May 1945	—forward party arrived at Tarakan
9 July 1945	—arrived at Balikpapan
2 October 1945	—final entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

26 Medical Clearing Station (26MCS) was formed at Kiriwina on 27 February 1944, partly from equipment and personnel of 3 Medical Receiving Station. The unit had instructions to be ready to embark on 2 March, but actually left Kiriwina on 6 March. Personnel disembarked at Milne Bay on 9 March and were quartered with 10 Works Supply Unit. After sailing from Milne Bay on 12 March, the unit proceeded via Finschhafen north to Los Negros, where personnel marched a mile and a half to the camp site after coming ashore in Hyane Harbour. All troops had stretchers and mosquito nets, but no tents or other forms of shelter. After two alterations to the site of the camp, and some help from Americans with a bulldozer, a prefabricated ward and operating theatre were built, and the first patients admitted on 29 March 1944. The hospital was running smoothly, with 30 beds occupied, by 31 March.

On 3 April the Commanding Officer departed by Walrus aircraft for Bat Island in response to an urgent signal for medical aid. Five patients were found to be very ill and were evacuated. By 6 April, the number of patients had exceeded 42, and all patients were required to bring their own stretchers on admission.

The unit was informed on 3 July of an impending move to Noemfoor, and patients were discharged to 73 Wing Headquarters on 14 July, the hospital dismantled and packed. On 19 July plans were changed, with 26MCS now instructed to proceed at once to Tadjj, where a new camp site was taken over from 30 Squadron and became operational by 27 July.

On 11 September 1944, patients were discharged and packing commenced for a forward echelon of 26MCS to take part in the landing on Morotai on 18 September. By the evening of that day, a ward had been erected and one patient admitted. The new hospital became operational after the arrival of the rear party on 30 September. Continuing air raids—19 during October—meant that trenches had to be dug for the patients during the month. As at 14 December 1944, 26MCS was acting as hospital for the whole of the RAAF on Morotai. All patients were evacuated to 23MCS early in January 1945 while a new camp was built away from the main thoroughfare, where conditions would hopefully be improved. This site was completed on 20 January, and the first patient was admitted the following day.

During March, a new prefabricated ward was built. On 24 April, the Commanding Officer and two medical orderlies joined the first convoy for 'Oboe 1', to assist with urgent medical work if required. The hospital closed on 30 April, with patients evacuated to 25MCS and 5MRS. The forward party arrived at Tarakan on 7 May 1945, followed by the rear party on 16 May. Three houses on the Anzac Highway at Tarakan were chosen as the new camp site. Jungle growth was cleared from the rear of the site, pickets were posted at night and floodlights installed around the outside of the tent area. The hospital was ready to receive patients by 20 May and was closed on 27 June in preparation for the move to participate in 'Oboe 2'.

26MCS arrived at Balikpapan on 9 July 1945 and the camp was set up and operational by 13 July, when 15 patients were admitted. 26MCS was now the only operational medical clearing station on Balikpapan, serving about 5000 RAAF personnel. As the result of air raids on 23, 24 and 25 July, trenches were dug for the patients, although no damage had been caused to the unit. A new hospital block was being built just after peace was declared, with accommodation for 50 patients.

At the end of September 1945, three airmen from 26MCS were selected to join the occupational forces in Japan.

There were no further entries in the Unit History Record.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 27 February 1944 | —Squadron Leader K.S. Harrison |
| 14 July 1944 | —Squadron Leader J.F. Hughes |
| 18 November 1944 | —Squadron Leader J. Hall-Johnston |

27 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

30 August 1944	—formed at Ballarat, Vic.
20 October 1944	—main party arrived at Fenton, NT
16 March 1945	—advance party arrived in New Britain
14 July 1945	—arrived in Borneo
11 October 1945	—Station disbanded

NARRATIVE

27 Medical Clearing Station (27MCS) was formed at Ballarat on 30 August 1944. On 9 October, the main party left Ballarat and travelled via Alice Springs to Fenton, arriving on 20 October. The rear party followed, arriving on 26 October.

The camp at Fenton was situated on a very rugged hilly site, with a lot of boulders and trees to be cleared. Since it was planned for the unit to stay at Fenton for some time, a change was made to the original idea of having the whole unit under canvas. It was decided to erect more permanent buildings from bush timber, galvanised iron and sawn timber, salvaged from demolished camps in the area. 27MCS finally became operational on 11 December.

On 27 December, the first two surgical operations were performed, and advice was received that the unit would shortly be moving to a forward area. All items of equipment not in immediate use were packed and the crates sprayed the required camouflage colour. An advance party from the unit left Darwin on 7 March 1945, arriving at Jacquinot Bay, New Britain, on 16 March. The hospital at Fenton remained operational, relying on the loan of messing gear, blankets and pillows from the sick quarters of other units. The remainder of the unit was to depart for Darwin en route to New Britain on 20–21 April 1945.

The orderly room at the new location began to function on 17 May; however 27MCS was not expected to become fully operational, as another move was imminent. The first camp site selected was in dense jungle and 4 miles from the airstrip, so a better site was chosen right next to the airstrip. The Army assisted with the construction of the camp, during which time the main party arrived on 9 May.

Personnel and equipment sailed for Borneo on 6 June, and after a three-week stay at Morotai, arrived at Balikpapan on 14 July. The new camp site consisted of two buildings previously used by the Japanese as sleeping quarters. Air raids took place on 23, 25 and 26 July, but no loss of life or damage to property occurred. A party of eight Japanese infiltrated in an attempt to destroy a water point near the unit, but were intercepted and killed by RAAF guards. The first surgical operation was performed on 20 August 1945 and even after the Japanese surrender the unit became busier, and improvements to the camp site and buildings were still in progress.

On 14 September, a Mitchell aircraft crashed at Banjarmasin, 200 miles to the south. The Commanding Officer and two others flew to the location to give medical attention to the one surviving crew member.

The Unit ceased to function on 8 October 1945, to be disbanded within the next three days.

COMMANDING OFFICER

31 August 1944

—Squadron Leader T.W. Vorrath

28 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

- 11 September 1944 —formed at Ransford, Vic.
- 10 November 1944 —arrived in Townsville, Qld
- 26 March 1945 —disembarked at Morotai
- 7 May 1945 —arrived at Tarakan
- October 1945 —final entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

28 Medical Clearing Station (28MCS) was formed at 1 Personnel Depot, Ransford, Victoria, on 11 September 1944. After stores were packed the unit left for Townsville, arriving on 10 November and lodging with 20 Medical Clearing Station before moving to Currajong at the beginning of December. The premises at Currajong were required to house WAAAF personnel, so 28MCS moved to Fulham Road on 17 December.

On 16 February, 28MCS was advised to be ready to load and all personnel were recalled from leave in anticipation of the move. The unit embarked on the troopship *SS Carlos Carrillo* on 10 March and disembarked at Morotai on 26 March. The month of April was spent in preparing the unit for forthcoming operations, and equipment was checked and repacked. On 14 April notice was received that 28MCS was to take part in 'Oboe 1' and firearms were issued to personnel. All 28MCS medical orderlies were attached to 5 Medical Receiving Station to gain experience of working under local conditions.

On 4 May the unit embarked on *HMAS Westralia*, arriving at Tarakan on 7 May. The camp site turned out to be a block of houses which had been bombed. Guards were posted as a result of much enemy activity in the area on the night the unit arrived. 28MCS admitted patients for the first time in its history on 16 May 1945, and the following day the first two operations were performed. Even after the Japanese surrender, the work of the unit remained at a high level.

Notification was received during October 1945 that 28MCS would be setting up with 78 Wing at Deniliquin on its return to Australia, but there are no further entries in the Unit History Record.

COMMANDING OFFICER

29 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

- 25 January 1945 —formed at Kingaroy, Qld
17 June 1945 —disembarked at Labuan
22 November 1945 —Station officially disbanded

NARRATIVE

29 Medical Clearing Station (29MCS) was formed on 25 January 1945 at Kingaroy, Queensland. By 31 March, 95 per cent of equipment had arrived and been checked and packed ready for moving. Unit strength was four officers and 30 other ranks. 'A' Echelon sailed from Brisbane on SS *Simon Bamberger* with the greater part of equipment on 2 May 1945, followed by 'C' Echelon, which sailed from Brisbane on the SS *Sea Ray* on 9 May. Two unit personnel remained in Brisbane with the rest of the unit equipment and later sailed aboard the SS *Robert Greer*.

'A' Echelon disembarked at Morotai on 16 May, and proceeded to a temporary camp site. On 22 May, 'C' Echelon arrived and camped with the others. On 5 June 1945 all 29MCS personnel boarded the *Simon Bamberger*, arriving at Labuan on 11 June. The unit disembarked at Labuan on 17 June, with all units of 86 Attack Wing.

The new camp site was very good and 29MCS moved in on 11 July, becoming partially operational on 16 July. Five patients were admitted on 17 July and when the operating theatre was completed and equipped on 23 July, 29MCS became fully operational. On 28 October the Commanding Officer decided to form a small convalescent hospital at a beach on the north-western side of Labuan.

The operating theatre ceased to function as at 12 November 1945 and equipment was greased and packed to be returned with other equipment to 30 Air Stores Park. An intense 'emu parade' was held at the camp on 13 November, as 84 Operational Base Unit was to take over the site as a transit camp when 29MCS disbanded. On 20 November 29MCS was advised that this was not to be, so tents were taken down, temporary buildings demolished and used and unserviceable equipment destroyed.

29MCS was officially disbanded on 22 November 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICER

8 February 1945 —Squadron Leader R.C. Gill

30 MEDICAL CLEARING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

- 19 February 1945 —formed at Ransford, Vic.
- 1 May 1945 —arrived at Fenton, NT
- 25 July 1945 —landed at Balikpapan
- 14 November 1945 —ceased to function with a view to disbandment

NARRATIVE

30 Medical Clearing Station (30MCS) was formed at 1 Personnel Depot at Ransford, Victoria, on 19 February 1945. On 19 April, the main party left for Fenton via Adelaide, Terowie, Alice Springs and Larrimah. After arriving at Fenton on 1 May, personnel settled into the barracks area of the camp site adjoining 82 Wing Headquarters the following day. The first patients were admitted on 3 May, and the first operation was performed on 9 May.

Packing of unit equipment ready for trucking to Darwin in preparation for the move overseas was begun on 29 May. At this stage the unit strength was four officers and 30 other ranks. On 7 June, unit personnel were conveyed by Army road transport to Darwin, where they were staged at the 42 Mile transit camp. 30MCS personnel boarded the USS *Cleveland Forbes* on 17 June and arrived at Port Moresby on 22 June, but did not disembark. On 27 June the ship anchored off Biak, departing the following day in convoy with an escort ship. On 30 June the *Cleveland Forbes* anchored off Morotai, where 30MCS was to stage for some days at an Army transit camp. 30MCS personnel were to be responsible for hygiene arrangements at the transit camp, and to conduct daily sick parades and medical treatments.

On 12 July personnel re-embarked on the *Cleveland Forbes*, arriving at Balikpapan on 16 July. The Commanding Officer and unit adjutant went ashore to inspect the 30MCS camp site. Six defused enemy booby trap mines were found at the camp. Unit personnel landed on Balikpapan beach on 25 July and began erecting tarpaulins as tents and posting guards at the camp site. The following day sick parade and treatments started for units based on 30MCS and an air raid took place.

A victory dinner was held on 15 August after news of the Japanese surrender was received. The unit became partly operational on 18 August. On 8 September a call was put out for volunteers for occupational forces duty in Japan.

On 30 October 1945, 30MCS was advised that it would cease to function as of 14 November. Packing, which was under way in accordance with a previous instruction, was to continue and the unit to function as an RAP only. Packing continued into November, with the assistance of Japanese POWs.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

12 March 1945	—Flight Lieutenant J.H. Isles
13 June 1945	—Squadron Leader W.B. Marsh

1 MEDICAL RECEIVING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

23 March 1942	—formed at Daly Waters, NT
September 1942	—moved to Coomalie Creek, NT
16 February 1945	—moved to Nightcliff, NT
28 February 1946	—final entry in the Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

The mobile surgical unit, presented to the RAAF by the Prahran Patriotic Society in August 1941 and detached from 1 RAAF Hospital at Laverton, formed the nucleus of 1 Medical Receiving Station (1MRS) when it was formed at Daly Waters on 23 March 1942.

The unit camp site was constructed at 5 Mile Water Hole. Admissions in the first month totalled 131, comprising RAAF and US personnel, and civilians.

At the beginning of September, 1MRS moved to a new site at Coomalie Creek and 271 patients were admitted during the month. Ophthalmic examinations of pilots of operational squadrons were conducted at the end of November 1942 to determine adaptation to darkness. Many air raids occurred at Coomalie strip, and on several occasions bombs fell within the boundaries of 1MRS. Wards were rebuilt during May 1943, and a new and more powerful X-ray machine installed at the beginning of June. During the unit's operation patients were airlifted to southern hospital facilities, with a Hudson aircraft used as an air ambulance for the first time in November 1944.

1MRS moved to Nightcliff on 16 February 1945 and continued functioning until the beginning of December that year, when it was reduced to a 45-bed hospital under an amended establishment table.

The final entry in the Unit History Record was on 28 February 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

29 April 1942	—Wing Commander P.J. Benjamin
7 October 1942	—Wing Commander D.S. Thomson
30 November 1943	—Wing Commander H.D. Phipps
13 January 1945	—Wing Commander R.W.D. Fisher
21 December 1945	—Flight Lieutenant J.H.P. Abbott

2 MEDICAL RECEIVING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

1 May 1942	—formed at Richmond, NSW
29 September 1942	—arrived at Townsville, Qld
29 December 1942	—moved to Milne Bay
7 May 1943	—moved to new camp site at Eaneanie
9 May 1943	—advance flight left for Goodenough Island
5 August 1943	—advance detachment to Kiriwina Island
27 June 1944	—detachment to Nadzab
September 1944	—arrived at Madang
February 1946	—winding down

NARRATIVE

2 Medical Receiving Station (2MRS) was formed on 1 May 1942 on a property called 'Clydesdale', 10 miles from RAAF Station Richmond. During the months of May and June, the unit carried out general duties in connection with camp and hospital organisation, and the RAAF flag was hoisted for the first time at a Commanding Officer's parade on 17 June.

At the end of June 1942, the nursing sisters were accommodated in the old servants' quarters in the main house, and the airmen moved outside into tents. The first patients were admitted on 11 July, and the first hospital marquee erected and put into use as a ward on 29 July.

On 26 August 1942, 2MRS co-operated in field exercises with the Army 3rd Medical Dressing Station.

On 16 September, the unit received official directions for a move to Townsville, and after the arrival of personnel on 29 September, sites were selected at Aitkenvale Road, just below the Ross River Weir. Camp preparations were completed during October, and by the 17th of that month, theatre, X-ray, dispensary and wards were ready to function. The first patients were admitted on 8 October, and the first operation carried out the following day.

Despite a request for 2MRS to move to another site, after the Army had laid claim to the one already occupied by the unit, the Commanding Officer refused to move with 90 patients, many of whom were recovering from surgery, to allow fit and healthy troops to move in.

Advice was received on 3 December 1942 that 2MRS was to move to Milne Bay, Papua, and the advance party left by air on 17 December, followed the next day by the main party, who embarked on the MV *Wanaka*, and arrived at Milne Bay on 29 December. The advance party had cleared the new camp site, and the unit moved there on New Years Eve 1942.

The first patients were admitted on 7 January, and camp construction duties continued during January 1943. One daylight and 10 night air raids took place during the month, with the danger coming not only from bombs, but also from the shrapnel from anti-aircraft fire.

After heavy rains caused the river to overflow its banks and flood half the camp site on 10 February 1943, 2MRS moved to a new camp site on 7 May at Eaneanie, in what had previously been a mission village. On 9 May, an advance medical flight left for Goodenough Island, and was ready to take patients by 21 May 1943.

On 7 June, Army engineers, who were using the unmade road through 2MRS for sawmill traffic, were given permission to haul out 150 logs in return for two loads of river gravel per day. Later, an arrangement was reached whereby Army engineers would repair and maintain the road in return for the use of it to cart out timber.

Five personnel left by air for Kiriwina Island on 5 August 1943, as an advance medical detachment, to operate a 20-bed sick quarter.

A small chapel, of native design and workmanship, was completed on 19 December 1943. After a traditional Christmas, lectures were given on 6 January 1944 on the preparation and cooking of dehydrated food.

In June 1944, one of the 2MRS personnel was sentenced to 130 days detention and four months forfeiture of pay and allowance for stealing a cigarette lighter. Later that month, the unit received instructions to form a medical detachment to handle 35 to 40 patients at Nadzab.

Preparations were under way during July and August 1944 for the unit's move to Madang in September. The camp had been partly set up by the advance party, and by the end of the month 37 patients were undergoing treatment in one operational ward. 2MRS was fully operational by 23 October 1944.

During January 1945, walking patients were treated to picnics, and a swimming pool was built, with aquatic competitions planned. In February, a cricket pitch, and badminton and volleyball courts were prepared, and organised sport took place every Wednesday afternoon. During September 1945 a large canoe, containing 2MRS personnel,

overturned at sea, and several non-swimmers were in danger of drowning. Swimming classes were promptly organised each afternoon. The Red Cross centre was well patronised by patients for games and reading, and handicraft instruction facilities were also available. This meant that patients were kept interested and occupied during the day. Launch picnics became a weekly feature, with patients taken to a nearby island, allowed to swim and fish, and given a picnic lunch.

Loudspeakers were installed in each ward, so that patients could listen to gramophone music.

By the end of February 1946, with the unit winding down, only one ward was left open, and only 28 patients remained at 2MRS.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

4 May 1942	—Squadron Leader P.R. Delamothe
22 April 1943	—Wing Commander C. Leleu
15 November 1943	—Wing Commander J.G. Brown
18 December 1944	—Wing Commander C.P. Hudson
16 March 1945	—Wing Commander J.K. Gabriel
1 December 1945	—Squadron Leader J.F. Ziegler
22 December 1945	—Squadron Leader W. Morrissy

3 MEDICAL RECEIVING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

1 May 1942	—formed at Amberley, Qld
4 May 1942	—party of officers left for Townsville, Qld
7 October 1942	—personnel sailed for Port Moresby
8 April 1943	—advance medical flight proceeded to Dobodura
18 August 1943	—advance party flew to Kiriwina
April 1944	—moved back to mainland and commenced functioning at Townsville
October 1944	—commenced transfer to the Army
February 1946	—Station disbanded

NARRATIVE

3 Medical Receiving Station (3MRS) was formed at Amberley on 1 May 1942. On 4 May, a party of officers posted to the unit left for Townsville, the new location of the unit. A camp site was selected at Bunting's Paddock, Aitkenvale. Personnel continued to join the unit throughout May 1942, and the camp was constructed during the following three months.

In June, instruction was held in unarmed defence and bayonet fighting, and air raids on Townsville took place three nights in a row from 26 July. A pathology demonstration of malaria and dysentery diagnosis panniers was held during August 1942. By the end of this month, 87 beds had been equipped at Currajong.

On 17 September, instructions were received for the unit to move to New Guinea, and packing commenced. Equipment and transport were loaded onto a cargo ship on 30 September. Personnel sailed for Port Moresby, arriving on 7 October, and the following day began to prepare the camp site at Goon Valley.

The hospital first received patients on 17 November 1942, and the first operation was performed on 21 November on a native with a spear wound in his back. During November–December, nursing sisters arrived on posting. There were several air raids at the end of November.

On 14 December, construction was commenced on shrapnel-proof shelters for surgical patients. Camp construction also continued, with the

erection of a resuscitation and casualty tent, fitted with equipment to treat patients suffering from shock. 3MRS hospital treated patients from the RAN, and United States personnel in addition to RAAF personnel.

An advance medical flight proceeded to Dobodura on 8 April 1943, expecting to be fully functional within two days. This flight returned on 17 May, and on 28 June 3MRS received orders to move to Goodenough Island. The advance party left by air on 3 July, taking building equipment with it. The second half of the advance party left two days afterwards, only to return later in the month as the move had been delayed.

At the beginning of August, instructions were received for the unit to move to Kiriwina by the end of the month. The advance party flew out on 18 August, and the remainder of the unit commenced packing. At the same time, an advance medical flight left to replace 2MRS advance medical flight.

The advance party at Kiriwina worked on the construction of the camp during September 1943, and the main body of unit personnel sailed with the equipment, completing the move by 12 September. By 20 September, 3MRS was ready to accept 80 surgical and medical cases. The advance medical flight ceased to function as of 20 September.

On 20 February 1944 word was received that 26 Medical Clearing Station (26MCS) was to be formed from 3MRS, and 26MCS personnel and equipment departed for 'Mercantile' on 5 March. 3MRS was instructed on 16 March to continue functioning, and had 40 beds equipped by 21 March. On 1 April 1944, the unit ceased to function in preparation for transfer to the mainland, and during the month moved back to function as a unit at Currajong in Townsville.

During July 1944, a routine was established—pictures were held on Sunday nights, medical consultations on Mondays and Thursdays, surgical consultations on Tuesdays and Fridays and skin consultations on Wednesdays.

The Townsville Red Cross ladies supplied comforts to the patients each week and Miss Donald lent a piano to the unit.

The hospital had been extremely busy since its move back to Townsville. Dengue fever was particularly prevalent during the wet season.

During October 1944, 3MRS commenced its transfer to the Army, Ross River Hospital, with the last of the equipment moved from Currajong on 8 December. During January 1945, DGMS informed 3MRS that it would retain its identity as a unit even though it was now a lodger unit with the

Army. The airmens' and sisters' quarters at the hospital had been without light since October, and preparations were made for these quarters to be wired immediately.

During March 1945, many patients from operational areas to the north were staged at 3MRS on their way to southern hospitals.

Clinical meetings were frequently held at the unit. Topics discussed included cases of bronchiectasis, hysterical blepharospasm, fracture of cervical spine, perinephric abscess and a case of ruptured liver.

On 10 August 1945, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester visited the unit, touring the wards and talking to many of the patients. A signal arrived on 14 August instructing the unit to take over the works and buildings of the Ross River Hospital, which had until recently been held by 2/14th AGH. As of 19 August, a total of 372 beds were taken over. Of these, 60 were allotted to the Army and 37 to the Navy.

Included in the numbers of en route patients staged at the hospital was a group of 20 POWs. However in the future, convoy patients were to be staged primarily at Station Sick Quarters Garbutt. During September, as units in the area were disbanded, the number of patients grew less, with three wards closing completely. During December 1945, the hospital admitted a record low number of patients—45.

By the beginning of February 1946 the disbandment of 3MRS was well under way, and by 8 February the unit was noted to have taken on the appearance of a 'ghost city'. On 10 February, the Ross River flooded the camp, and an SOS was sent out to Garbutt for ambulances to evacuate the patients. As the airmen were helping to remove the sisters' belongings, all the rubbish drums took off and floated away from the unit. The Army's 160 Transport Section assisted with the evacuations.

No further entries were made in the Unit History Record.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1 May 1942	—Wing Commander J.C. Fulton
12 December 1942	—Wing Commander J.W. Leleu
28 April 1943	—Squadron Leader G.B. Baldwin
1 October 1943	—Wing Commander D.C. Howle
1 October 1944	—Wing Commander B.J. Basil-Jones
15 October 1945	—Squadron Leader N.L. Newman

4 MEDICAL RECEIVING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

1 May 1942	—formed at Pearce, WA
October 1943	—moved to Corunna Downs
November 1944	—moved to Broome
October 1945	—Station disbanded

NARRATIVE

4 Medical Receiving Station (4MRS) was formed at Pearce, Western Australia, on 1 May 1942, and three days later personnel moved into a house and tents on Woodsome Estate, a property off the main Perth to Gin Gin road. There were approximately 500 troops in the area, with patients being taken in from RAAF Pearce, 77 Squadron and Army personnel.

Accommodation at the unit consisted of two stores tents being used as wards, and 20 other tents erected around the main house. The house itself was used for stores, a provisional operating theatre, offices and messing. A garden area had been cultivated for growing vegetables. Slit trenches had been dug, and large red crosses painted on the roof of the house. Sick parades for Army personnel continued during June, with most patients suffering from impetigo, suggesting a lack of vitamins in their diet.

During July, a test of the mobility of the dispensary was made, with the entire dispensary being dismantled and packed on a tender by two men in 24 minutes.

In August 1942, hospital facilities were put to the test, and came through with flying colours, when five patients were admitted after a transport accident. The operating theatre was ready within 15 minutes of the arrival of the ambulance, and all patients were hospitalised and treatment begun within one and a quarter hours.

By the beginning of October 1943, the unit was packed up and ready to move from Belmont to Corunna Downs. Camp construction was commenced at the new location and the first patient admitted on 15 October. The floor of the operating theatre tent was made of red earth spread over the stony surface, then watered. Later in the month, this was covered with loose sand, and finally with linoleum.

Mail and food services at this location were reported to be very poor—mail was picked up and delivered only once a week. Rations were supposed to be sent from the Army at Port Hedland by train once a week, but the train only ran about once in every two to three weeks at best.

At the beginning of November, 4MRS assisted 73 Operational Base Unit in preparing the camp for the impending arrival of about 260 personnel from American squadrons. The first strike took place from Corunna Downs on 9 November 1943, when 14 Liberators took off. By 16 November, there were 700 personnel on the Station, the American squadrons having doubled in size. When these squadrons left again on 19 November, the Station was reported to be in a filthy condition.

The operating theatre was 'christened' on 3 December 1943 when an appendectomy was performed.

On 6 December, the Commanding Officer left to inspect 4MRS Detached Flight, which had moved from Exmouth Gulf to Broome in October. The flight was found to be comfortably settled and functioning well.

Nursing sisters arrived at the unit unexpectedly on 30 December 1943. On 19 January 1944, the cause of a sudden outbreak of food poisoning, affecting 72 personnel, was found to be rice. On 31 January, the first unit picnic was held at Marble Bar.

On 3 February 1944, the Commanding Officer visited 74 Operational Base Unit by air ambulance. Injections were given, an inspection made of the unit, consultations held, and three members brought back for further medical investigation.

Using the air ambulance, such visits were made on a regular basis to surrounding units, and to outback stations to give medical assistance to families and workers alike. Patients were transported to hospital if necessary, and liaison kept up with civilian doctors in practice in the area. Assistance was also given with delivering babies.

An Army–Air Force concert party provided the first entertainment for troops in the history of the Station on 14 February 1944, and the first picture show was held on 19 February.

Advice was received on 25 February that 4MRS was to carry the civil medical practice at Marble Bar, excluding the flying doctor service.

By 12 March, the USAAF squadrons were beginning to arrive once again, and by 25 April there were 1400 service personnel on the Station.

On 11 April, arrangements were made to set up the unit about 2 miles from the Station, to ensure safety in the event of an enemy raid. On 27 April, electric light was available for the first time in most of the hospital.

St John Ambulance first aid classes began for all unit personnel at the beginning of May 1944. These were conducted with a view to training personnel in rescue work.

At the end of August 1944, the unit Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader Sangster, was killed when the air ambulance crashed into the sea after taking off from 76 Operational Base Unit at 'Potshot'.

With temperatures of 110 degrees Fahrenheit inside and 115 outside, packing commenced on 28 November 1944 for the unit's move to Broome. On 14 December, 4MRS was ready to function, with the Commanding Officer, three nursing sisters and two medical orderlies using civil equipment. The remainder of unit personnel arrived on 17 December with the equipment by sea.

Whilst at Broome, 4MRS carried on with its work of rendering medical assistance to units in the area, conducting hygiene inspections and working closely with civilian doctors.

During bad weather associated with a cyclone in March 1945, water damaged the officers', sergeants' and airmen's quarters at 4MRS. Broome Hospital was also badly affected—panes of glass were missing in doors, and empty panes were covered with brown paper or cloth in an attempt to keep the water out. The roofing was in such a bad state that the water poured through, and staff had no choice but to work in the slushy conditions without gum boots.

On 1 July 1945, the first twins were born at the hospital since it was taken over by the RAAF in December 1944. They were both girls, and all were reported to be doing well.

4MRS disbanded at the end of October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

4 May 1942	—Wing Commander R.I.G. Greenham
24 September 1943	—Wing Commander J. Oxe
20 May 1944	—Squadron Leader J.C. Sangster
29 September 1944	—Squadron Leader D.B. Skewes
6 July 1945	—Wing Commander F.F. Ellis

5 MEDICAL RECEIVING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

May 1942	—formed at Werribee, Vic.
December 1942	—moved to Townsville, Qld
29 August 1943	—arrived at Goodenough Island
11 September 1944	—arrived at Biak
14 February 1945	—moved to Morotai
28 June 1945	—moved to Labuan
5 December 1945	—nucleus of unit arrived at Wagga Wagga

NARRATIVE

5 Medical Receiving Station (5MRS) was formed at Werribee, Victoria, in May 1942. The first operation was performed in the new theatre on 22 October 1942.

During December 1942 the unit moved to Townsville. The camp was quickly put into order and patients admitted eight days after the unit arrived—33 major and 24 minor operations were performed during January 1943, with 112 beds equipped.

All patients were evacuated from the hospital on 20 July, pending the movement of 5MRS. The unit embarked at Townsville on 23 August 1943, arriving at Goodenough Island six days later. Camp construction commenced on 3 September and dental, X-ray and pathology sections began operations. The hospital admitted patients from 15 September.

5MRS moved to Biak on 11 September 1944 on the Liberty ship *Sydney H. Short*, and thence to Morotai at the beginning of February 1945. This time, 5MRS embarked on a number of vessels for the move, including HMAS *Ararat*, HMAS *Bundaberg*, HMAS *Deloraine*, HMAS *Stawell*, HMAS *Rockhampton*, and SS *William H. Prescott*. The rear party arrived by air, with the unit re-located by 15 February 1945.

Towards the end of February, urgently needed drugs were supplied to 3 Airfield Construction Squadron at Mindoro, for use against an outbreak of schistosomiasis.

By the beginning of April 1945, preparations were under way for the movement of 5MRS to Borneo. The total number of patients reached 107 on 11 April, when an extra ward had to be erected. The air ambulance was used for the first time on 17 April, evacuating seven patients.

After dismantling and packing began on 28 May 1945, 5MRS officially closed two days later, in preparation for the move to Labuan. The advance party disembarked at Labuan on 12 June, and located the new camp site where a temporary hut was erected. An air alert during unloading meant that equipment had been dumped in any available space, and was very difficult to locate. On 14 June, a bulldozer worked for half a day to prepare the site, and a stores tent was erected.

Guard duties were undertaken each night, with members carrying out a two-hour shift in conjunction with Army sentinels. A Japanese was shot by guards on the edge of the camp site on 15 June. The advance party continued with the erection of tents and cutting of timber. One member was shot and killed during this time by a Japanese sniper.

The main party arrived at Labuan on 28 June, and personnel began camp construction two days later. Rain and mud hampered this work, but patients were eventually received on 17 July. Torrential rain fell in the month, and staff were hard pressed to keep patients dry and comfortable. On 1 August, four RAAF nursing sisters arrived at the unit.

In accordance with 1st TAF policy, two personnel daily were authorised to visit Brooktown, and four to fly a 34 Squadron 'Biscuit Bomber', as recreation prior to demobilisation.

Eight airmen were posted to 81 Wing on 9 October 1945 to join a contingent headed for Japan. This reduced the staff numbers to 46, which caused great difficulties in keeping the unit functional with 75 patients in the hospital.

Word was received on 10 October that 5MRS would form part of the post-war Air Force, and was now to move to Wagga Wagga as a lodger unit on 1 RAAF Hospital. All personnel except a nucleus of six were posted to other units and departed Labuan. The remaining six embarked at Labuan on 15 November, and proceeded via Townsville to Wagga Wagga, arriving on 5 December 1945. 5MRS was to remain at Wagga Wagga awaiting future expansion as part of the permanent Air Force.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1 May 1942	—Wing Commander R.R. Macdonald
15 December 1943	—Wing Commander C.P. Ley
15 January 1945	—Wing Commander S.F. Reid
14 November 1945	—Flight Lieutenant M.V. Clarke

6 MEDICAL RECEIVING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

1 December 1942	—formed at Werribee, Vic.
28 May 1943	—advance party arrived at Merauke
11 June 1943	—main party arrived at Merauke
1 April 1945	—ceased to function

NARRATIVE

6 Medical Receiving Station (6MRS) was formed at 'The Manor', Werribee, on 1 December 1942. The administration of 'The Manor' hospital, a 50-bed temporary hospital, was continued by the previous occupants, 5 Medical Receiving Station (5MRS). 6MRS personnel were apprenticed to their opposite numbers at 5MRS for instructional purposes. On 10 December, administration of 'The Manor' hospital was taken over by 6MRS personnel.

General policy laid down by the Director General Medical Services was as follows:

1. to use 'The Manor' as a sick quarters for surrounding units; and
2. to proceed with equipping 6MRS for mobile warfare.

During the following months, the unit continued to be equipped as a mobile medical receiving station. The operating theatre opened on 16 March 1943, and after an X-ray machine was installed, the first picture was taken on 25 March. Patients were admitted from 1 April 1943.

On 9 April, a signal arrived to warn 6MRS to be ready to move to Merauke, and all patients were discharged on 15 April in preparation for this. Unit personnel departed Werribee on 23 April, and arrived in Townsville on 1 May. Two days later, 6MRS moved to Aitkenvale strip and set up a temporary camp.

The advance party embarked on MV *Wanaka* on 23 May, sailing via Horn Island, and arriving at Merauke on 28 May. They unloaded equipment and made a temporary camp in the main street. Work was begun on the permanent camp site by driving to the swamp edge, then walking through the swamp.

The main party travelled by train to Cairns, where they embarked on MV *Both*, arriving at Thursday Island on 31 May, and finally at Merauke on 11 June 1943. While they were en route, the kitchen, ablutions and

operating theatre had been completed, and erection of the hospital commenced. The first patient was admitted on 14 June.

Electric light was connected to the wards on 23 June, and the first operation performed the day after. Voting for the federal election was held at the unit on 19 August 1943.

During the following months, 6MRS provided a hospital service to Army, United States forces and RAAF units in the Merauke area. This service was later extended to include Navy and NEI personnel.

On 21 June 1944, 16 NEI personnel were evacuated from Hollandia to 6MRS. These patients had been POWs, and were suffering from malnutrition and berri-berri. Seventeen Army patients were admitted on 17 July, as a result of a premature mortar shell explosion.

6MRS moved to a new location on 23 February 1945. This was completed in one day with the unit still functioning throughout.

On 24 March 1945, a signal was received advising 6MRS that the unit was to cease to function as of 1 April. The hospital was closed on this day, and equipment checked and packed. 6MRS moved out of Merauke on 21 April on SS *Thedens*, arriving in Townsville six days later. Equipment was gradually issued off, and personnel awaited posting.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

3 December 1942	—Squadron Leader H.D. Phipps
10 January 1943	—Wing Commander J.C. Laver
24 September 1943	—Squadron Leader O.W. Leitch
8 June 1944	—Wing Commander A.J. Ahearn

7 MEDICAL RECEIVING STATION

CHRONOLOGY

- 16 July 1945 —formed at Morotai
19 November 1945 —ceased to function

NARRATIVE

7 Medical Receiving Station (7MRS) was formed at Morotai and became fully operational on 16 July 1945, after the closure of 25 Medical Clearing Station at the same location the previous day.

One of the highlights of unit life was the weekly visit by Red Cross representatives, who distributed comforts to patients, and introduced handicrafts to ward patients. A new X-ray machine was delivered on 25 August, and on 29 August a fire, which started in one of the wards when a primus flared up on lighting, burnt half of the marquee before being brought under control. Fortunately there were no casualties, and there was little damage done to equipment.

A 'bottleneck' occurred when patients were evacuated to 7MRS from Borneo. These patients were being held at the unit for up to 12 days before moving on. This meant there were in excess of 40 patients awaiting transport south at any one time.

A service greatly appreciated by all was the daily delivery by ANA of bundles of southern newspapers for distribution in the wards.

During October 1945, a washing machine driven by a jeep engine was installed, and a marquee erected as an airmen's recreation hut. A piano was procured and a table tennis table installed.

Advice was received on 4 November 1945 that 7MRS was to be reduced to a one-ward hospital. Surplus wards were dismantled and tents used as airmen's living quarters were demolished and burnt. Equipment that could be salvaged was given to the Dutch hospital or other RAAF units.

On 19 November 1945, the remaining eight patients were transferred to 2/9 AGH, and 7MRS ceased to function.

COMMANDING OFFICER

1 MEDICAL REHABILITATION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 16 November 1942 —formed as 1 Convalescent Depot at Flemington Racecourse, Vic.
3 December 1942 —moved to 'Travancore' in Flemington
March 1943 —moved to Warburton, Vic.
June 1944 —re-named 1 Medical Rehabilitation Unit
15 April 1946 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

1 Convalescent Depot was formed at Flemington Racecourse, Victoria, on 16 November 1942, and moved on 3 December to 'Travancore', Flemington Road, Flemington. The Unit moved again to Warburton in early March 1943.

By the beginning of June 1943, a convalescent routine had been well established, with medical section, physical training, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy working to a definite routine. Medical cases were reviewed every 10 days. Diversional therapy consisted of light crafts, including feltwork, weaving, pottery and leatherwork, and heavy crafts, such as carpentry, and fitting and turning. Outdoor crafts were gardening and animal husbandry. A WAAAF craft worker and WAAAF occupational therapist were posted to the Unit to manage the light craft program.

The Unit library was fully established during the month of August. Correspondence courses were arranged and encouraged for the convalescents, in an attempt to make up educational training time lost during a stay in hospital.

During September 1943, a new and fuller convalescent program was instituted. This program attempted to bring into force modern ideas on medical science rehabilitation, particularly in regard to large disease groups, such as orthopaedics, neuroses, severe medical and surgical disabilities, malaria and tropical diseases.

In October, patients began to be reviewed on a weekly basis. Unit improvements during the month included completion of the remedial

therapy rooms, extension of the animal husbandry pens, repair and painting of the swimming pool and windows, and increased floor space in the gym.

During November 1943, a combined X-ray and plaster room was being constructed. This room was a necessity, due to the increase in admissions of orthopaedic patients, who required X-ray checks and changes of plaster. Previously, patients had to travel to Melbourne for an X-ray. The depot was now developing as a medical rehabilitation unit, with all patients given a program designed to restore full physical and psychological recovery in the shortest possible time.

In January 1944, with the depot at full strength, even cases in need of urgent rehabilitation had to be refused due to lack of accommodation.

Cycling as an organised sport was introduced in April 1944, when six light frame bicycles were received at the Unit.

The name of the Unit changed to 1 Medical Rehabilitation Unit at the beginning of June 1944. The new name conveyed more effectively the nature and scope of the Unit. Also during the month, welfare winter excursions were introduced to Mt Donna Buang, so convalescing patients could enjoy the snow. The concert hall was also extensively redecorated by welfare, and Red Cross donated another piano to the Unit.

During July 1944, the Unit extensively reviewed its long-term policy. Subjects under discussion included plans to improve sporting amenities during the next two months.

Snow trips were organised for convalescing patients during September, as part of organised sport, and work began on a sports oval. Newport Workshop's concert party entertained the troops during October and presented the Unit with some valuable amplifying equipment. Work commenced on WAAAF quarters and gym in November 1944.

Arrangements were made with the Forestry Commission on 23 January to man the lower lookout at Mt Donna Buang for fire watching. Three men at a time for three-day periods were utilised.

On 8 February 1945, an open air concert was held, and Red Cross handcraft workers inspected the Unit on 9 February. On 21 February, the 'Gadabouts' concert party played at the Unit. The number of convalescents grew steadily during the month reaching 214 by the 28th.

The fourth birthday of the WAAAF was celebrated on 15 March, when about 90 people attended a successful and enjoyable dance. A concert by the 'Revellers' was held on 19 March.

Sixty patients went to the snow at Mt Donna Buang on 8 July 1945, and on 23 March convalescents and staff took part in the Unit tennis tournament. On 28 July, four members of 'The Polar' table tennis club in Melbourne visited the Unit, gave an exhibition of table tennis and played matches against patients and staff. An exhibition of arts and crafts was opened in the Red Cross hut on 14 August and members of the public were able to view the exhibits. Competitive entries were judged the following day.

Picnics for convalescents were held at Maroondah Reserve during November 1945. In December, two officers from War History Section, RAAF Headquarters, visited the Unit and took photos of POW activities.

During February and March 1946, the Unit commenced winding down, in preparation for disbandment on 15 April 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

16 November 1942	—Flight Lieutenant D.O. Longmuir
28 August 1944	—Squadron Leader D.T. Shortridge
28 September 1945	—Squadron Leader D.O. Longmuir

2 MEDICAL REHABILITATION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1 October 1942 | —formed as 2 Convalescent Depot at Marsden Park, NSW |
| 1 March 1944 | —moved to Jervis Bay |
| June 1944 | —re-named 2 Medical Rehabilitation Unit |
| 31 July 1946 | —ceased to function |

NARRATIVE

2 Convalescent Depot was formed at Clydesdale, Marsden Park, New South Wales, on 1 October 1942, when 40 patients were accommodated. These patients had been discharged from hospitals or convalescent homes after no longer requiring active hospital treatment. Their physical condition had to be built up so that they could be posted back to their units and resume their normal duties as quickly as possible.

During March 1943, two padres from RAAF Station Richmond visited the Unit, to attend to the spiritual welfare of staff and patients. The Unit was in the process of developing a mixed farm, the profits from which would go to the welfare club. A veterinary surgeon from the Department of Agriculture visited the Unit to inspect the pigs and sties.

In April, the New South Wales Red Cross Commissioner visited to discuss comforts, recreation and occupational therapy. Subsequently, on 15 May, the Red Cross representative delivered two radio sets, one dozen packs of cards and a roll of coir matting for the patients.

Beginning in June 1943, patients were regularly taken to the cinema at Richmond Station, and to dances at Quakers Hill. Thirty-five WAAAF personnel from Richmond attended a dance arranged at 2MRU for patients on 16 June.

During heavy rain at the end of August, leave was granted to personnel who had homes in the Sydney area, as the leaking conditions of sleeping marquees made the accommodation situation difficult. Also during the month, a new stage was erected in the barn for concerts and the physiotherapy department equipped and ready for use. At the end of August, a billiard table donated by the Red Cross Society was erected in the recreation room.



Portable wireless equipment in use at Richmond, August 1932



Corporal S. Turner and Aircraftwoman E.D. Smith, wireless telegraphists at Headquarters Southern Area, July 1945



Bloodhound missile testing, Guided Weapons Instruction Unit



Hardly a highway—7 Airfield Construction Squadron en route Lae to Nadzab, 1943



Airfield construction equipment disembarked from an LST, Borneo, 1945



A surveyor, with all his paraphernalia, prepares to survey an airfield site



Maintenance on heavy earthmoving vehicles operated by an airfield construction squadron



5 Airfield Construction Squadron operation at Learmonth, Western Australia



L-R: Corporals S. Thurbon and J. Tait and Leading Aircraftman G. Walklato (RAF) being trained to operate a light anti-aircraft weapon at Butterworth



Air Defence Guards leap into action, March 1991



Air Defence Guards at Butterworth training camp, October 1984



Squadron Leader Norm Cooper with a 1/4 plate Speed Graphic Press camera as used by the RAAF in the 1950s and 1960s

Orchestra drums, a pick-up and electric turntable purchased by the Unit welfare committee were delivered and a staff concert party organised on 1 October 1943.

On 4 November work was begun on the old barn to convert it into a dance floor and concert hall, which was opened on 1 December with a dance and variety turns.

On 18 December, the Minister for Air visited the Unit to discuss a possible move to a new location.

Late in the afternoon of 10 January 1944, heavy wind and rain blew down two of the recreation tents. Hail and rain soaked all beds and bedding of 80 personnel sleeping in the marquee, on the verandah and in the prefab hut. Beds were moved to the barn for the night and bedding re-issued. The next day, 20 patients who were Sydney residents were sent home to allow re-organisation following the rain.

The magneto from the engine used to pump water became unserviceable at the end of January 1944, and water had to be carted from Riverstone. A tractor was borrowed in an effort to fill the tanks as no water was available for the ablutions, and it was not possible for all patients to carry buckets of water to the bathrooms.

Fire breaks were burned around the buildings on 14 February, and personnel were sent to help control a bushfire which was threatening a farm whose owners were absent.

On 22 February, preparations were under way for a move to Jervis Bay, which the Unit took over on 1 March 1944. The handover of buildings was completed by 11 March, with the rear party arriving from Clydesdale the following day. On 18 March, arrangements were made with 3 Hospital for the first patients to be admitted.

After arriving at Jervis Bay, patients at the Unit undertook carpentry work, painting and gardening as occupational therapy, to get the buildings and grounds up to standard. A program of remedial exercises, PT and recreational games was introduced in line with a similar successful program in the United Kingdom.

By the end of May 1944, up to 150 patients were able to be accommodated at the one time. Arrangements were also being made to obtain temporary warm clothing for issue to patients, especially to those returning from tropical areas.

During June 1944, the Nowra Red Cross Society ladies provided lunch each Monday and Friday for new patients arriving at the railway station. The Unit chapel was removed from the gym to another building to allow

the entire gym to be used for remedial activities. A full rehabilitation program was put into operation during July 1944. Construction was commenced on 7 August on a bowling green for the patients to use.

During November 1944, the RAAF public relations officer and a party of press reporters visited to film Unit activities. On 20 November, a local bushfire endangered service buildings, and fit patients and staff were enlisted to put it out.

The bowling green was completed in December, and grass planted, even though a breakdown at the pumping plant resulted in strict water restrictions.

At the end of April, the vocational guidance officer visited the Unit for three days to test personnel who were about to be discharged, and prepare them for civilian employment.

On 15 July, members of the Unit were invited to go on board HMS *Duke of York*, which had called in at Jervis Bay. Also during July, an adult version of an infant walker was donated by the Red Cross. This device was to prove invaluable for the instruction of personnel with injured backs and limbs to walk again. One injured aircrew member, who had returned from the UK and was suffering from a spinal disability, designed and had built a wheeled chariot from old cycles, as he was to rest on his back for 18 months. This way, he could be pushed around the Unit by other personnel. The Red Cross hut was opened during July, with a buffet dinner in the Officers' Mess.

Twenty-four POWs were admitted during October 1945 and, at the end of the month, an intake of POWs commenced from the Pacific area.

2MRU ceased to function as a unit on 31 July 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

15 October 1942	—Flight Lieutenant W.G. Gailey
22 February 1943	—Squadron Leader A.H. Pennington
6 January 1944	—Flight Lieutenant J.B. Curtis
29 February 1944	—Squadron Leader G.G. Burniston

3 MEDICAL REHABILITATION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 23 February 1943 | —formed as 3 Convalescent Depot at Southport, Qld |
| 1 July 1944 | —re-named 3 Medical Rehabilitation Unit |
| May 1946 | —last entry in Unit History Record |

NARRATIVE

3 Convalescent Depot was formed on 23 February 1943, based at 3 Stores Depot, Brisbane. The Unit consisted of three main buildings, formerly private homes—'Seabank', 'Huntington', and 'The Bungalow' all situated in Marine Parade, Southport. Future plans for the depot included the construction of six new buildings, and the conversion of eight existing outhouses and garages. Until the commencement of the regular daily delivery of Army rations, Unit personnel were messed at Welch's Cafe, Nerang Street, Southport.

The first intake of patients arrived on 9 March 1943. Non-effective personnel assisted with work in the depot grounds for short periods each day as part of their convalescent treatment. By the end of March 1943, the grounds had been cleaned, lawns planted and the appearance of the depot generally improved. Facilities included a canteen, recreation room and medical facilities, with 33 patients now on strength.

During this time, patients continued with work on the lawns and gardens, also undertaking sport, PT and surfing as they were able. On 29 July, work was started on the construction of the new buildings and the conversion of existing ones. This work was finally completed at the end of April 1944.

During May, the RAAF mobile cinema show screened films on the lawn in front of 'Seabank', for all Unit personnel. A two-mile route march into the bush was led by the Commanding Officer on 16 May. Those unable to march were transported by tender. Tea was followed by community singing, before returning to the Unit.

Improvements to the Unit were made by convalescents during May 1944, and pathways and fences were constructed. Twenty patients were

taken on a trip to Murwillumbah in a Red Cross tender on 17 May. On 21 May, another 20 patients were taken on a motor launch trip to Stradbroke Island. This outing was organised by the Southport branch of the Red Cross Society.

One of the convalescing patients, a sergeant fabric worker, gave a lecture on the fitting, wearing and opening of a parachute on 6 June, and the following day gave a demonstration of folding and packing a parachute.

Also during the month, Air Training Corps cadets visited the Unit for P and RT training, under the direction of the staff drill instructor. Later in the month, cadets were lectured on mathematics and electrical science by the Unit education officer, then by the Unit adjutant on Air Force law. On 14 June, a 16mm sound projector had been received, and a film supplied by the American Red Cross Society was screened.

The name of the Unit was changed on 1 July 1944 to 3 Medical Rehabilitation Unit.

By 18 July, an amplifying system was installed and operating. Selected radio programs and musical recordings were broadcast at set times during the day.

Three beehives were secured and functioning for the welfare of patients by the beginning of August 1944. On 11 August, the American Red Cross presented the Unit with books and games for the use of patients. On 17 August, a USAF cameraman filmed a short movie of Unit activities, with a copy to be made available to the Unit. On 25 August, a new recreation and picture hut was completed and the first screening of a film in the Unit cinema held for all Unit personnel.

On 25 September, a woodworking lathe arrived at the Unit for use in the occupational therapy section. Convalescent patients began to do their physical training on the beach.

One hundred fowls, a gift to Unit welfare by 3 Wireless Air Gunners School at Maryborough, arrived at the Unit on 7 October. The Red Cross organised trips to Murwillumbah and Cudgen Headland during October and November 1944.

On 10 January, a *Courier Mail* photographer and reporter and the RAAF public relations officer visited the Unit for a series of pictures.

A military band held a concert in the Unit grounds on 30 March and on 11 April, the State string quartet from the Department of Education gave a recital for patients. POWs were admitted to the Unit from May

1945, and on 24 May, electricity was installed in the prefabricated huts, and an electric washing machine connected and working.

During the latter half of 1945, more POWs were admitted to the Unit, and the Red Cross organised trips for the patients. Personnel were gradually posted out to personnel depots pending demobilisation.

On 4 March 1946, the Southport CWA younger set entertained Unit members at a social evening.

By the end of May, Unit strength consisted of 26 staff and 49 patients.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

23 February 1943	—Flight Lieutenant W.G. Gailey
28 March 1944	—Squadron Leader D.T. Shortridge
22 September 1944	—Squadron Leader T.J. Fennell
29 November 1945	—Squadron Leader R. Opie
10 December 1945	—Flight Lieutenant D.R. Sheumack

4 MEDICAL REHABILITATION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 30 August 1943 | —formed as 4 Convalescent Depot Subiaco, WA |
| 21 October 1943 | —moved to Yanchep, WA |
| 27 January 1946 | —final entry in Unit History Record |

NARRATIVE

4 Convalescent Depot was formed on 30 August 1943, at 5 Embarkation Depot, Subiaco, Western Australia, with instructions to move to Yanchep at a later date, and accommodated at the Yanchep Inn.

The move took two days from 21 October 1943, but both the inn and hostel were found to be badly in need of repair. The hostel in particular was in a shocking condition and little or no attention had been paid to the grounds, gardens, lawns or tennis courts for at least 18 months. Nevertheless the first new patient was received on 25 October 1943.

On 2 November, the hostel was closed for three days to allow for the fumigation of bed bugs and white ants. Further treatment for bed bugs was carried out later in the month. The daily average number of patients was now 25.

The major aim of the Unit was to return cases of operational fatigue and illness to duty as soon as possible and the rehabilitation of unfit personnel into either service or civilian life.

PT at the Unit was based mainly on organised sport, selected exercises and physical outdoor work. On the patient welfare side, a program of organised entertainment became available. Pictures, concert parties, social evenings or dances were held once a week, with a billiard table and extensive library available. The carpentry section was fully operational for occupational therapy in March 1944; other forms of occupational therapy available included tennis, basketball, volleyball and deck quoits. Poultry raising was initiated and flower gardens prepared. The services of a full postal unit began on 15 March.

92 By the end of April, after the arrival of a masseuse, patients were being accepted for physiotherapy. Organised sporting facilities were

increased, with the addition of cricket, fishing and hiking. Also during April, patients took part in daily lectures, with a weekly debate and discussions and quizzes being run. In addition patients were now also able to undertake correspondence courses.

The occupational therapy section expanded during May 1944, with leather work, felt work and draughtsmanship being offered.

In August, the establishment of the Unit was increased from 50 to 75 beds, due to the steady increase in patient numbers. A display of work from the occupational therapy section was held in conjunction with a tennis party and dance to celebrate the anniversary of the Unit on 13 September 1944.

During October 1944, interviews and lectures were held in connection with rehabilitation and post-war matters, with the last entry in the Unit History Record being made on 27 January 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

30 August 1943 —Flight Lieutenant T.H. Walker

15 November 1944 —Flight Lieutenant W.W. Rail

5 MEDICAL REHABILITATION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 19 October 1942 | —formed as 5 Convalescent Depot at Mount Osmond, SA |
| 16 September 1943 | —moved to Mount Barker, SA |
| July 1944 | —re-named 5 Medical Rehabilitation Unit |
| 14 May 1945 | —moved to Victor Harbour, SA |
| 8 May 1946 | —ceased to be a RAAF unit |

NARRATIVE

5 Convalescent Depot formed at Mount Osmond, South Australia, on 19 October 1942. On 20 October, the first patient arrived for admission, followed on 31 October by quantities of comforts, chairs, lockers and fittings donated by the Red Cross, who also supplied cigarettes for the patients in November.

The Burnside Council visited the Unit on 8 December, when fire breaks were made and discussions held on precautions to be taken in the prevention of bushfires. The physiotherapy department began functioning on 14 December. Equipment on hand included two infra-red lamps donated by the Red Cross. Other devices, such as wall bars and pulley machines, were being made in the workshop.

On 24 and 30 December 1942, the Unit was completely without water when the pump broke down. Patients were evacuated to their homes or to nearby units. Also during the month, livestock were donated to the Unit, increasing the availability of fresh milk and eggs. Material obtained by the Red Cross for the nursing sisters' quarters was made into curtains and bed covers. Window blinds had also been donated.

Sporting facilities on the Unit were excellent, consisting of a nine-hole golf course, and two lawn tennis courts, one of which was used for bowls. Swimming parades were held once or twice weekly.

Workshop, gardening and livestock work, and study, were available in the way of occupational therapy. Rosters were drawn up so that patients did not tire too easily, while also being able to undertake a range of activities. Most patients gladly participated in activities offered. A

library was established, with books supplied by the Red Cross, and the country lending section of the public library.

The Unit moved to Mount Barker on 16 September 1943, taking over the Red Cross rest home. Up until now, two-thirds of patients had been accommodated in this home, which was situated 15 miles from the depot. The move made it easier to run a carefully planned program and routine of work, play and rest, combined with remedial games, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

After the move, it was necessary for patients to help with Unit construction work, but things were soon back to normal, and in the following months plans were made to establish a wireless room and a potter's shop. A potter's wheel was considered to be good for foot, hand and eye co-ordination. The gym was fitted with massage cubicles and a plaster room.

It had always been the policy of the Unit to 'salvage' many ex-patients who had passed through the depot, and then employ them as staff. This served two purposes—to 'reclaim these men from the realms of the unfit and rejected', and to free up young, fit men for active service.

During September 1943, plans were made to set up a model farm on seven acres of land adjoining the Unit. Functions of the farm included instructing patients in methods of mixed farming, whilst making some profit for welfare by the sale of stock and produce.

By January 1944, occupational therapy activities had expanded to include leather work, bookbinding, spinning, and twine and basket work. On arrival at the depot, each man was issued with a card, setting out a daily program on a weekly basis. By the end of March 1944, there were 65 beds equipped at the Unit.

Work ceased on the model farm at the beginning of October 1944, as the Unit awaited a decision on a move to a new location. A week-long move to Victor Harbour commenced on 14 May 1945, with limited function resuming at the new location on 23 May. Outside occupational therapy such as gardening was begun at once, but activities such as woodwork, and the functions of the physiotherapy department, were held up awaiting the installation of power points to enable equipment to be operated. Red Cross representatives visited with a view to supplying materials to brighten up the interior of the buildings, which were in a state of disrepair.

In August 1945, a special daily program of activities was introduced, after the arrival of a number of POWs. During the months after the

Japanese surrender, the main function of the Unit was the rehabilitation of POWs. It was reported that the majority of these patients made extremely good progress due to organised outdoor recreation and good messing. Patients and staff had been kept busy painting rooms and arranging new furnishings. On the welfare side, free films were shown three times a week for Unit personnel.

At Christmas 1945, Girl Guide representatives donated literature to the patients, and the Red Cross donated Christmas hampers. POW numbers had decreased, and maximum effort was put into occupational therapy and physiotherapy, as most convalescents were orthopaedic patients just out of hospital. Organised sport had now moved outdoors, and swimming and beach activities provided excellent rehabilitation opportunities.

The Unit ceased to function on 20 April 1946, and patients were transferred to 7 RAAF Hospital and 4 Personnel Depot. A disbandment program commenced from that date, and 5 Medical Rehabilitation Unit ceased to be a RAAF unit as of 8 May 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

19 October 1942	—Flight Lieutenant H.G. Andrew
31 October 1944	—Flight Lieutenant C.L. Gibbons
25 October 1945	—Flight Lieutenant N.F. Pescott
21 February 1946	—Flight Lieutenant W.J. Betts

6 MEDICAL REHABILITATION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 16 July 1943 —formed as 6 Convalescent Depot at Werribee, Vic.
- 1 November 1943 —commenced move to North-Eastern Area
- July 1944 —re-named 6 Medical Rehabilitation Unit
- 20 August 1945 —ceased to function

CHRONOLOGY

6 Convalescent Depot formed on 16 July 1943 at 'The Manor', Werribee, Victoria, and left for North-Eastern Area on 1 November 1943, arriving at Mount Spec near Townsville on 13 November.

Before patients could be admitted, depot staff were required to paint the interior of houses at the Unit's new location, to counteract deterioration due to the humid climate.

Fifty-eight convalescents were housed at the Unit by the end of February 1944, and occupational therapy included making cane furniture, rug making and the raising of poultry and pigs.

Once a fortnight, WAAAF personnel from Townsville were invited to spend an afternoon at the Unit, and attend a dance in the evening. Fishing trips to the coast were organised three times a week—enjoyed by the patients, and the many fish caught were a welcome addition to the diet of Unit personnel.

A billiard table and piano proved to be popular with patients. It was also found that those convalescing at the depot gained great benefit from the climate in which the Unit was located. By the end of March 1944, a vegetable garden had been laid out, and fencing of the camp was almost complete.

In April, the area welfare officer was contacted with regard to procuring several horses for the convalescents to ride. Seventy patients were accommodated during the month. Also during April, arrangements were made to use a log cabin, given to the Unit by United States forces, as accommodation for WAAAF personnel to use on weekends, so they

would not have to leave evening functions early in order to get back to Townsville.

Red Cross donated £300 (\$600) to the Unit during May 1944, to be used for improving recreational facilities. During the month, seating in an ambulance was converted to transport convalescents from Townsville, by mounting canvas chairs on a wooden frame, and sliding this into the space made for stretchers.

In July 1944, the name of the Unit was changed to 6 Medical Rehabilitation Unit.

Weekly picnics and sports days became increasingly popular during August 1944, bringing out the competitive spirit in convalescents. The daily program was altered during September 1944 to include more general and remedial PT and recreational games. General improvements and painting continued on the Unit, and a large area of ground was cleared for a sports ground. A 'summer house' was erected outside the Officers' Mess. Just before Christmas, a new swimming pool was completed by damming a creek. The result was a pool 40 x 40 yards and two yards deep.

Convalescent numbers in July 1945 were the smallest on record, with the Red Cross still supplying foodstuffs to supplement the diet of personnel.

On 20 August 1945, the Unit ceased to function, and the disbandment process began. A skeleton staff was retained to handle stores accounting and wind up administration. During the Unit's existence, between 800 and 1000 patients passed through the depot, with the majority returning to their units as fit class 1. Those who required further treatment were transferred to hospitals, then back to the Unit for a second spell. The Commanding Officer commented on the excellent spirit of loyalty, co-operation and friendliness which had existed between staff members.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

16 July 1943 —Flight Lieutenant J.A. Conquest

1 December 1944 —Flight Lieutenant J.L. Sinclair

7 MEDICAL REHABILITATION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 18 May 1943 | —formed as 7 Convalescent Depot at Werribee, Vic. |
| 16 August 1943 | —arrived at Berrimah, NT |
| July 1944 | —re-named 7 Medical Rehabilitation Unit |
| 21 July 1944 | —moved to Berry Springs |
| 25 August 1945 | —moved to Nightcliff, NT |
| 31 August 1945 | —last entry in Unit History Record |

NARRATIVE

7 Convalescent Depot formed at 'The Manor', Werribee, Victoria, on 18 May 1943. The Unit travelled overland to Berrimah, Northern Territory, arriving at its new location on 16 August. The first group of 11 patients was admitted during September 1943.

In March 1944, staff completed anti-gas training, under instruction from 2 Mobile Ground Defence Instructional School. The name of the Unit was changed in July 1944 to 7 Medical Rehabilitation Unit (7MRU), and it moved to Berry Springs on 21 July. Although living conditions were not as comfortable as at Berrimah, this was more than compensated for by an excellent swimming pool.

During the ensuing months, patients who attended Army PT and physiotherapy classes continued to show a great improvement in their physical condition. In December 1944, the average daily number of patients under treatment at the Unit was 39.

By the end of June 1945, with very few patients left, the Unit was preparing to move closer to Darwin. In July, patient numbers hit an all time low, with a daily average of 19.

7MRU moved to Nightcliff on 25 August 1945, with the last entry in the Unit History Record on 31 August 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 24 May 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant A.P. Cahill |
| 22 April 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant J.L. Sinclair |
| 13 October 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant R.E. Hearn |

8 MEDICAL REHABILITATION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

16 April 1943	—formed as 8 Convalescent Depot at Werribee, Vic.
May 1943	—moved to Townsville, Qld
4 July 1943	—arrived at Port Moresby
11 July 1943	—moved to Sogeri
6 July 1944	—re-named 8 Medical Rehabilitation Unit
4 August 1945	—ceased to function
30 August 1945	—Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

8 Convalescent Depot was formed at 'The Manor', Werribee, Victoria, on 16 April 1943, and prepared to move to Townsville on 14 May. The Unit subsequently left Townsville on MV *Wanaka* on 1 July, arriving at Port Moresby three days later, and moving on to Sogeri on 11 July.

The first patients arrived on 18 August 1943, and by the end of December all 50 beds at the Unit were continually occupied, and the Unit was functioning well. Arrangements were completed on 15 January 1944 for an additional 25 beds to be made available.

Daylight saving was discontinued on 26 March 1944, and Unit welfare in the form of weekly quiz nights and community singing continued. Red Cross personnel visited on a weekly basis to instruct in occupational therapy.

The Unit held a dinner on 4 July 1944 to celebrate its first anniversary in New Guinea. Two days later, the name of the Unit was changed to 8 Medical Rehabilitation Unit (8MRU).

On 23 September 1944, a film projector arrived at the Unit, and the first picture show was held on 27 September in a building in the Royal Papuan Constabulary camp. This building had an iron roof, and seats for 500.

A tennis court was completed on 31 October 1944. Assistance with construction came from Bisiatabu Gaol, and the Royal Papuan Constabulary. Squadron Leader Reddie, of Historical Records Section, RAAF

Headquarters, visited the Unit on 9 December 1944, to collect data and photographs.

8MRU ceased to function on 4 August 1945, after a disbandment directive was received on 1 August. Secret and confidential publications were sent safe hand to Port Moresby, and stores and equipment returned to the equipment section. Equipment was packed and despatched, and 8MRU disbanded on 30 August 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

16 April 1943	—Flight Lieutenant F.J. Collett
5 August 1944	—Flight Lieutenant C.W. Kingston
16 May 1945	—Squadron Leader F.J.B. Drake

1 OPERATIONAL SUPPORT UNIT

Versatility



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 8 May 1966 | —formed as Base Support Flight at RAAF Fairbairn, ACT |
| 12 May 1966 | —arrived in Vung Tau, Vietnam |
| 19 September 1968 | —re-named 1 Operational Support Unit |
| 29 February 1972 | —Unit disbanded |
| 1981–1983 | —reformed to varying stages to support Australian Defence Force exercises |
| 7 February 1984 | —officially reformed at RAAF Richmond, NSW |
| December 1985 | —re-located to Toowoomba, Qld |
| December 1992 | —re-located to Townsville, Qld |
| November 1994 | —based at Townsville |

NARRATIVE

The Unit was originally formed as Base Support Flight (BSF) at RAAF Fairbairn on 8 May 1966 and placed under the overall command of Air Officer Commanding Operational Command. Squadron Leader C.G. Kilsby was posted in as Commanding Officer and, accompanied by an advance party of two officers and five airmen, departed Australia on 12 May 1966 for Vung Tau, Vietnam. Base Support Flight's role in Vung Tau was to provide domestic, administrative and medical support to the RAAF contingent in the area. Whilst in Vung Tau, the flight was under the direct command of Headquarters, 1 Australian Task Force Vung Tau. Personnel attached to Base Support Flight began arriving in Vung Tau in

the proceeding week from 5 Airfield Construction Squadron (5ACS) and Base Squadron Butterworth to assist in the construction of facilities and routine tasks. The main party arrived in Vung Tau on 12 June 1966, bringing total numbers to 82; nine officers and 73 other ranks.

Living accommodation was in tents and one building which initially housed all sections. Transport problems were also experienced in the early stages but these were alleviated by the arrival of a 2.5-ton truck along with other necessary equipment.

The next six months was a busy period for BSF and included orchestrating a number of medical evacuation flights of Australian Military Forces back to Australia. Building construction began in earnest for more permanent living and working areas. In February 1967, the flight activated the largest medical evacuation load ever moved by a RAAF aircraft, which involved 51 injured servicemen, 48 stretcher cases and three walking wounded.

In June 1968 the Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader A.S. Matters, received the Queen's Commendation for valuable service to the Air Force and two former non-commissioned officers received Mentions In Dispatches in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Base Support Flight was re-named 1 Operational Support Unit (1OSU) on 19 September 1968. The re-naming was considered important as recognition had been gained for the efforts of all members in carrying out their duties by supporting two flying squadrons. Only one month after this, Vung Tau came under attack from 122mm rockets from Long Son Island, but 1OSU sustained no damage to installations or personnel. There was a further rocket attack from Long Son Island in January 1969, causing the death of two and wounding of 14 US Army personnel.

Over the next two years, 1OSU continued to support the RAAF contingent in the area, including 9 Squadron and 35 Squadron. During this time there were further irregular rocket attacks and on one occasion the rockets destroyed a 300 000 gallon fuel tank as well as minor damage to a Chinook and extensive damage to a United States Iroquois.

On 27 September 1971, Headquarters RAAF Forces Vietnam arrived in Vung Tau after transfer from Saigon. On 29 February 1972, with Australia's commitment to the Vietnam conflict over, 1OSU disbanded and all members returned to units in Australia.

During the period 1981-1983, 1OSU was reformed to varying degrees to support major Australian Defence Force exercises. However, on 7 February 1984, the Chief of the Air Staff approved formation of a

permanent logistic unit capable of supporting a tactical air support force (TASF) at forward RAAF airfields, resulting in the official reforming of IOSU at RAAF Richmond, New South Wales.

IOSU became an independent self-accounting unit and was established with a small permanent cadre staff with the capability for rapid expansion. The Unit's primary role was to provide operational, administrative and logistical services to support RAAF elements deployed in operations. This meant that the Unit had to be on wartime footing with a 'short notice to move'. IOSU was one of only a few non-flying RAAF units in such a category (and continues to be so today).

The first Commanding Officer of the newly reformed IOSU was tasked with finding a suitable 'home base' for the Unit and RAAF Toowoomba was finally chosen as the most suitable location. By December 1985 the Unit, equipment and staff had re-located. Whilst at Toowoomba, IOSU assisted the civil community with flood relief at Narromine and Nyngan, New South Wales. In December 1992, IOSU re-located to RAAF Townsville, Queensland, partly due to changes in Australia's defence policy, which now concentrates on northern Australia.

In September 1993 the Unit finally moved to its first permanent purpose-built buildings. It now remains under the direct command of Operational Support Wing, which is part of Operational Support Group, both of which are located at RAAF Townsville.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

8 May 1966	—Squadron Leader C.G. Kilsby
6 May 1967	—Squadron Leader J.T. Carter
16 February 1968	—Squadron Leader A.S. Matters
4 February 1969	—Squadron Leader M.M. Alexander
28 January 1970	—Squadron Leader P.W. Kennedy
3 December 1970	—Squadron Leader Greenwood
27 November 1971	—Squadron Leader R.A. Carey
1 July 1981	—Squadron Leader C.A. Nelson
7 February 1984	—Wing Commander L.F. James
2 December 1985	—Wing Commander G.R. Crombie
20 December 1987	—Wing Commander A.K. Aldridge
3 July 1989	—Wing Commander A.P.C. Fairman
18 June 1991	—Squadron Leader R.K. Cook
6 January 1992	—Squadron Leader M.A.R. Gower

1 RAAF HOSPITAL

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 September 1940 | —formed at Laverton, Vic. |
| 2 May 1942 | —moved to Wagga Wagga, NSW |
| 18 February 1946 | —Hospital disbanded |

NARRATIVE

On 1 September 1940, 1 RAAF Hospital was formed at Laverton, Victoria, as an intermediate hospital for the Laverton area. Squadron Leader P.J. Benjamin was the first Commanding Officer and the operating theatre opened in November 1940.

On 2 May 1942, 1 RAAF Hospital commenced its move from Laverton to Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. In August 1942 the Hospital started treating all seriously ill patients within the Wagga Wagga district, including Army personnel stationed there.

On 30 September 1943, the Red Cross Commissioner for New South Wales visited the Hospital. In October 1943, a training course for nursing orderlies and sick quarter attendants was organised and preliminary arrangements made for barracks and lecture room accommodation. Construction of the new hospital was progressing well and by December 1943 most of the buildings were complete.

At the suggestion of the Officer Commanding Group, the medical section of Headquarters Group was transferred entirely to 1 RAAF Hospital. In May 1944, the Army carried out general improvements to the Hospital grounds and the capacity of the X-ray department was significantly increased with the installation of a larger plant from Richmond.

Patient numbers were in decline by the end of 1945 and 1 RAAF Hospital disbanded on 18 February 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 September 1940 | —Squadron Leader P.J. Benjamin |
| 1 February 1942 | —Squadron Leader F.G. Steele |
| 1 April 1943 | —Squadron Leader A.J. Ahern |
| 20 May 1943 | —Squadron Leader T.W. Vorrath |
| 1 June 1944 | —Wing Commander O.W. Leitch |

2 RAAF HOSPITAL

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 October 1940 | —formed at Ascot Vale, Vic. |
| 10 May 1946 | —Hospital disbanded |

NARRATIVE

2 RAAF Hospital was formed on 1 October 1940 at the Showgrounds, Ascot Vale, Victoria, incorporating the existing sick quarters at 1 Engineering School, Ascot Vale. 2 RAAF Hospital also acted as an intermediate hospital for 1 Engineering School and adjacent units. Squadron Leader P.R. Delamonthe was appointed Commanding Officer.

On 10 March 1941, the first operation was carried out at 2 RAAF Hospital. At the beginning of 1942, 484 patients were admitted, 519 were discharged and 172 remained as inpatients.

As at 28 February 1942, the staff at the Hospital consisted of the Commanding Officer, 19 officers, 26 nurses, and 124 airmen and airwomen. During February there had been significant changes to staff but the volume of work had also increased considerably owing to the Japanese invasion of the Far East. There was a further increase in workload during March, when members of the AIF and American personnel were admitted on arrival back in Australia. At the same time the Hospital was responsible for the medical examination of a growing number of returning Australian servicemen. Medical officers of the Allied forces visited the Hospital during March 1942 and acted in a consultative capacity on several occasions. Three additional small wards were completed in March and the Hospital then had 442 beds.

The main problem facing 2 RAAF Hospital in April 1942 was an influenza epidemic of moderate severity which resulted in a steady increase in the number of admissions, including a number of staff. Patients suffering from measles, mumps and influenza formed the majority of inpatients at the Hospital in June. At one stage, over 170 inpatients were suffering from measles. During October, there were major changes to the operating procedures at 2 RAAF Hospital—new instructions meant that all surgical cases of a major nature were to be treated at 6 RAAF Hospital.

During January 1944, the number of inpatients at 2 RAAF Hospital declined, mainly due to the transfer of all long-term cases and all non-infectious skin cases to 6 RAAF Hospital. Christmas 1944 saw staffing levels and workloads stabilise as the total number of inpatients dropped considerably. Nineteen cases of a long-term nature were transferred to Tocumwal by a hospital train.

On 1 September 1945, command of the unit was transferred from Headquarters 1 Training Group to Headquarters Southern Area. The work of the inpatient department was about average but the work of the outpatient department had increased considerably due to the large number of examinations performed on servicemen ready for discharge on the conclusion of hostilities.

The unit was disbanded on 10 May 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1 October 1940	—Squadron Leader P.R. Delamonthe
13 May 1941	—Squadron Leader A.B. Anderson
19 December 1941	—Squadron Leader D.S. Thomson
26 September 1942	—Wing Commander P.J. Benjamin
1 October 1945	—Squadron Leader G.C.V. Thompson
29 October 1945	—Wing Commander V.E. Knight
21 December 1945	—Squadron Leader A.G. Uglow
7 February 1946	—Wing Commander R.W.D. Fisher

3 RAAF HOSPITAL

Care Where Needed



CHRONOLOGY

15 October 1940	—formed at RAAF Base Richmond, NSW
1 May 1942	—moved to Bradfield Park, NSW
1 October 1949	—moved back to Richmond
November 1994	—based at Richmond

NARRATIVE

3 RAAF Hospital was formed as a separate unit at RAAF Base Richmond, New South Wales, on 15 October 1940. A collection of buildings, which included the previous station sick quarters, provided a bed capacity of 34, an outpatient section and a dental section. Manning was initially 12 officers, five nurses, one warrant officer and 32 other ranks. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant A.W. Raymond.

Expansion and additions to buildings and staff increased the bed capacity to 122 by the end of June 1941. In May 1942 the unit moved to Bradfield Park and towards the end of 1942 was again re-located to the Army General Hospital Concord. The bed capacity rose gradually to 500 by the end of 1945. In October 1949 the unit moved back to Richmond.

A new facet of operations commenced in August 1959, with aeromedical evacuation becoming a formal task accepted by 3 Hospital. This service was used extensively, particular with regard to medical evacuations of casualties from Vietnam via 4 Hospital, Butterworth. In February 1967 an aeromedical evacuation flight brought 51 patients from Vung Tau to Richmond, stopping at Butterworth to refuel.

The importance of the aeromedical capability of 3 Hospital was shown clearly during the aftermath of Cyclone 'Tracy' at Darwin in December

1974. The medical teams were responsible for the supervision and care of some 2000 evacuees and 400 patients, the majority suffering from severe injuries. No loss of life occurred during these operations.

Nowadays 3 Hospital provides medical services for service members at Richmond and hospital services for RAAF, Army and RAN personnel in eastern and northern Australia. Outpatient services are provided for a population of about 4000 service personnel, comprising 2600 from RAAF Richmond, and the remainder from surrounding units. The present hospital is a medical facility providing service in the fields of general medicine, surgery, dentistry, pharmacy, radiology, pathology, physiotherapy, environmental health, health education, aviation medicine and aeromedical evacuation.

There are three specialist flights located at 3 Hospital: the Alcohol Rehabilitation and Education Flight; the Operational Health Support and Training Flight; and the RAAF Central Reference Laboratory. The Alcohol Rehabilitation and Education Flight provides a service to Army, Navy and RAAF members who have developed problems with alcohol abuse. It provides an inpatient treatment program, which supplements that offered by Alcoholics Anonymous. The Operational Health Support and Training Flight has two main roles. The first is to acquire and develop equipment and techniques to be used for health support of RAAF operations in field conditions, including wartime situations and Defence assistance in natural disasters. This frequently involves personnel in using their equipment and techniques in major Defence exercises. The second role is that of training, especially in operational health support, aeromedical evacuation, aviation medicine and first aid. The Central Reference Laboratory provides comprehensive pathology services for the Air Force across Australia, and other Australian Defence Force establishments within the locality of RAAF Richmond. With some of the most technologically advanced equipment available, the laboratory carries out biochemical, microbiological, and haematological analysis and much more.

In January 1994, 3 Hospital was involved in the evacuation and extended support of nursing home members in the Blue Mountains during the New South Wales bushfire disaster. In August 1994 several members of 3 Hospital were sent to Rwanda in Africa for United Nations peacekeeping duties.

3 Hospital's long and distinguished record fulfils its motto 'Care Where Needed'.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

15 October 1940	—Flight Lieutenant A.W. Raymond
20 November 1940	—Squadron Leader D.S. Thomson
1 October 1941	—Wing Commander W.D.C. Farrar
17 April 1942	—Squadron Leader E.C. Heffernan
28 May 1943	—Wing Commander F.G. Steele
9 September 1944	—Wing Commander J.C. Fulton
24 October 1945	—Wing Commander C.J. Cummins
29 July 1946	—Wing Commander J.D. Russell
10 February 1947	—Wing Commander A.W. Raymond
1 March 1948	—Wing Commander N.M. Kater
14 February 1949	—Wing Commander C.J.N. Leleu
25 August 1953	—Squadron Leader L.R. Trudinger
5 June 1957	—Wing Commander H.T. Hardy
8 September 1958	—Squadron Leader J.R. Harrison
11 February 1959	—Squadron Leader E.H. Stephenson
4 September 1961	—Wing Commander G.S. Radford
20 September 1965	—Wing Commander E.H. Stephenson
17 August 1967	—Wing Commander J.I. Cromarty (RAF)
7 August 1969	—Wing Commander R.J.L. Tebbutt
11 February 1971	—Wing Commander G.C. Nelson
15 January 1980	—Wing Commander D.P. Senior
8 December 1981	—Wing Commander M.M. Herring
1 September 1983	—Wing Commander M.P. Hubble
10 May 1986	—Wing Commander P.H. Shumack
1 January 1988	—Wing Commander D.J. Gardiner
5 February 1991	—Wing Commander G.R. Peel
25 January 1993	—Wing Commander S.C. Babou

4 RAAF HOSPITAL

Prevention and Cure



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 7 May 1943 | —formed at Sale, Vic. |
| 11 August 1946 | —Hospital disbanded |
| 1 March 1965 | —reformed Butterworth, Malaysia |
| 1 July 1987 | —Hospital disbanded |

NARRATIVE

4 RAAF Hospital was formed at Sale, Victoria, on 7 May 1943. Its first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader R.W.D. Fisher. On 12 May 1943, Mr N. Wright, the District Architect, Department of Interior, arrived to discuss alterations to the hospital buildings. He informed staff that the buildings would be ready for occupation by the end of the month.

On 16 June 1943, the Principal Medical Officer, 1 Training Group, Group Captain W.D. Counsell, along with Wing Commander H. Phipps, inspected the Hospital as part of their annual inspection tour. By 30 June 1943, most of the renovations to the buildings had been completed, except for a small number of connections required for steam-operated equipment in the kitchen and sterilising rooms. There was, however, a considerable amount of furniture not yet delivered.

On 30 July 1943, nine patients were admitted to the RAAF ward at Gippsland Hospital. At the same time, operating theatres were equipped and made ready for work at 4 RAAF Hospital. Later on the same day, 4 RAAF Hospital admitted its first patients. From the time of opening to 25 August 1943, the total number of admissions was 124. Over the same period, 76 patients were discharged.

Infectious diseases patients had not so far presented any major problems and had been placed in small wards comprising single rooms. An isolation ward, however, was especially equipped for infectious diseases patients. Cases of scarlet fever and diphtheria would now be treated in the isolation ward at the Gippsland Hospital.

On 17 March 1944, a medical officer from 4 RAAF Hospital was assigned part-time work at the Gippsland Hospital in the absence of a resident medical officer at that hospital. Also in March 1944, the erection of a Red Cross hut was still under consideration, awaiting the approval of the Air Board. At the same time, convalescent patients were now engaged in a variety of handcrafts which kept them occupied for a good deal of the time. This work was supervised by voluntary Red Cross workers, with assistance from the Hospital staff.

On 19 July 1944, the nursing staff held a dance to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the RAAF Nursing Service. The large number of guests present, both service and civilian, was clearly a tribute to the high esteem in which the Nursing Service was held. The good work being done by all staff at the unit was very much apparent.

On 8 August 1944, a unit party was held to celebrate the first anniversary of the opening of the Hospital. A dance and supper was held, and a number of personnel from neighbouring units were invited. On the same day, a supply of much needed penicillin was received at the Hospital.

On 18 December 1945, an enjoyable card evening was held in the Red Cross hut. This was organised by the matron and the sisters in order to raise funds for the patients prior to Christmas. On Christmas Day itself, midday dinner was served to the patients who were all gathered together in a 'flexible' ward which was suitably decked out for the occasion. A great time was had by all.

With the end of hostilities patient numbers began to decline. The Hospital was disbanded on 11 August 1946.

On 1 March 1965, 4 RAAF Hospital rose again like a mythical phoenix and was established at Butterworth, Malaysia, with a complement of 146 personnel. The RAAF medical and nursing staff were supplemented by health services personnel from the British Army, Royal Air Force and locally employed civilians. The Australian Red Cross also provided a representative. The first Commanding Officer was Group Captain H.T. Hardy and Wing Officer N. Maher was appointed Matron. The primary role of 4 Hospital was to provide comprehensive health care

and specialist services to Australian and British Commonwealth Defence Force personnel and their dependants located in the area together with aeromedical evacuation within Malaysia and from South Vietnam to Australia and Singapore. Additionally, the Hospital provided the following services:

- outpatients care for approximately 1350 indigenous employees
- specialist care for the members of the Gurkha Regiment and their dependants and
- a health clinic located on Penang Island for service personnel and their dependants

This role grew over the years and reached its zenith during the Vietnam war when the workload increased considerably necessitating an increase in health services personnel. This gap was filled by RAAF medical and nursing officers and RAAF Specialist Reserve officers. Additionally nursing officers were attached from Australia on a six-monthly rotation.

The confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia from 1963 to 1966 also added to the workload of the Hospital with the attachment to Butterworth of an Australian Army artillery regiment.

The number of battle and non-battle casualties evacuated via 4 Hospital from Vietnam totalled some 3164. This included Navy, Army and Air Force personnel from Australia and New Zealand. RAAF medical and nursing officers from 4 Hospital were seconded to the Australian Army field hospital at Vung Tau to assist with the treatment of casualties following the Battle of Long Tan in August 1967 and the Tet Offensive in 1968. Such was the volume of casualties that many were evacuated direct to 4 Hospital for primary surgery and stabilisation before being moved to Australia. Nursing officers and medical assistants from 4 Hospital were also seconded to the USAF 902nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron in the Philippines and flew AME missions from Vietnam to Korea, Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong and the United States.

During the Malaysian Emergency in 1968, 4 Hospital admitted 16 members of the Malaysian Police Force severely injured in a border clash with communist terrorists at Betong.

The last of the British staff departed in August 1974, thus ending an era. The farewell function was suitably named 'End of the Raj'.

In April 1975, 4 Hospital was involved in the medical processing of 215 Vietnamese children (aged three days to 10 years) escorting them from Saigon to Bangkok in a C-130 Hercules aircraft for onward

movement to Australia by Qantas. Just prior to the fall of Saigon, a further 77 Vietnamese war orphans (aged two weeks to four years) were evacuated to Thailand by Hospital staff for onward movement to Australia by civilian medical teams flying Qantas. This was a great team effort with high morale as everyone worked together to get these unfortunate children to a new home.

As with all RAAF hospitals, 4 Hospital provided services way beyond that normally expected of a civilian hospital. These services included:

- general practitioner services
- specialist medical services
- preventative and curative dental services
- environmental health services including public health, anti-malarial and occupational health services; public health services and a treatment clinic for locally employed civilians
- aviation medicine services to flying operations
- aeromedical evacuation operations—local and overseas
- continuing surveillance of the medical fitness of all service personnel

The provision of these services was a major task in itself, compounded by the remoteness of geographical location, with its endemic diseases and the need to resupply medical items and equipment from Australia.

Cholera, typhoid and malaria were endemic in the Butterworth area and there was a high incidence of tuberculosis in the local population. Importance was placed on the conduct of an effective preventive health program to minimise disease risks to the service population. Specialist services such as surgical, anaesthetic, psychiatry, gynaecology and obstetrics were provided by Specialist Reserve medical officers from Australia on a rotational basis. The excellent private hospitals on Penang Island provided additional specialist support beyond the capacity of 4 Hospital. The two RAAF fighter squadrons located at Butterworth presented a continuing and challenging demand in providing aviation medicine support in a tropical environment.

As part of the reduction in the RAAF presence in Butterworth, an Air Force Organisation Directive was issued in April 1987 directing the closure of 4 RAAF Hospital with effect 1 July 1987. To commemorate the closure, all locally employed civilians serving at the Hospital were presented with certificates in appreciation of their contribution to 4 Hospital over the 22 years. To formally mark the disbandment, senior

RAAF officers and local dignitaries attended a ball arranged by unit personnel on 30 June 1987.

A base medical and dental flight was formed to support the remaining service personnel. The Hospital was disbanded on 1 July 1987.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

7 May 1943	—Squadron Leader R.W.D. Fisher
25 September 1944	—Squadron Leader C.P. Hudson
1 December 1944	—Squadron Leader A.E. Dickmann
1 March 1965	—Group Captain H.T. Hardy
4 September 1967	—Group Captain E.H. Stephenson
15 January 1969	—Group Captain D.A.S. Morgan
9 June 1971	—Group Captain R.W. Plowright
21 January 1974	—Wing Commander M.D. Miller
7 February 1975	—Wing Commander W.J. Smith
24 January 1977	—Wing Commander G.T. Killer
19 August 1978	—Wing Commander E.M. Bone
6 December 1978	—Wing Commander G.D. Moller
18 December 1980	—Wing Commander G.T. Killer
9 August 1982	—Wing Commander R.I. Fawcett
12 December 1984	—Wing Commander J.M. Harrison
6 August 1985	—Wing Commander W.K. Harrex

5 RAAF HOSPITAL

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 6 August 1943 | —formed at Tocumwal, NSW |
| 1 March 1946 | —Hospital disbanded |

NARRATIVE

5 RAAF Hospital was formed at Tocumwal, New South Wales, on 6 August 1943. It took over the hospital at Barooga built for the United States Army when it was occupying the station at Tocumwal. The original plan was for 600 beds, but only nine wards of 24 to 30 beds were built. However the administration section was built for the full 600-bed establishment. Prior to the RAAF takeover the hospital had never been occupied. It was situated on the property of Mr Keech near the Murray River. Water from the river was used and there was also a separate sewerage system. The first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader V.E. Knight and there was an establishment of four officers, six RAAF nursing sisters and 24 other ranks.

Food at the Hospital was supplemented with rabbits which abounded in the area. The rabbit skins were sold to supplement the welfare fund. They also set fish traps and craypots in the river. A vegetable patch was begun as well. Because of its bush setting the Hospital had to be prepared for outbreaks of bushfires. An official from the New South Wales Fire Brigade gave lectures to staff members on fire fighting methods.

To entertain patients and staff alike an appeal was made through the local newspaper for the loan or purchase of a piano. On 25 September 1943 the presentation of a piano was made by Mr Hill of Tocumwal. The piano was a great comfort to all and by the end of 1943 a much larger one was purchased by the RAAF Canteen Welfare Committee. Local Red Cross members visited the Hospital bringing comfort parcels and mending the patients' clothing. Arrangements were made with a steam laundry at Albury for the laundering of all Hospital articles pending a decision regarding the issuing of electric washing machines. On 16 December 1943 a new ward was opened for infectious patients and a concert was given for patients by the 8th Australian Employment Company.

In January 1944 there were serious bushfires in the area which Hospital personnel helped to extinguish. In February 1944 an official

thank you was sent from the Forestry Commission. In June 1944 there was an epidemic of streptococcal throat infections; 64 patients were admitted on the first day of the outbreak. Samples of river water were taken to try to gauge where the outbreak originated. However the epidemic did not last very long and staffing returned to normal. A dance and official dinner were held in July 1944 to celebrate the anniversary of the Hospital's formation.

The Hospital continued to function well and the staff were able to maintain a high standard of patient care. The Red Cross began handicraft classes much to the enjoyment of the patients and staff.

At the end of the War the number of patients started to drop. Staff were beginning to be demobbed. On 1 March 1946 the Hospital was disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

7 September 1943	—Squadron Leader V.E. Knight
6 September 1944	—Wing Commander F.F. Ellis
11 June 1945	—Wing Commander C.H. Ahern
12 September 1945	—Squadron Leader C.H. Anderson

6 RAAF HOSPITAL

Protection and Support



CHRONOLOGY

- 16 November 1942 —raised as a lodger unit of 115 Army General Hospital at Heidelberg, Vic.
- 23 May 1949 —moved to RAAF Base Laverton, Vic.
- November 1994 —based at Laverton, Vic.

NARRATIVE

6 RAAF Hospital began service as a lodger unit of 115 Army General Hospital, Heidelberg, to provide care and rehabilitation for servicemen returned from active service overseas. The Hospital was re-located to RAAF Base Laverton on 23 May 1949.

Squadron Leader W.M. Lemmon was the first Commanding Officer, taking command on 16 November 1942. On only one occasion has command shifted away from the medical officer category when Wing Commander Maree Dean, nursing officer, assumed command from 11 December 1984 until 14 December 1987.

Over the last decade the unit has embarked on a significant rebuilding program, along with a change from a dedicated support role to an emphasis on operational health support to the Australian Defence Force in peacetime exercises, multinational and United Nations operations. Replacement of outdated and inappropriate facilities has allowed the unit to increase the number and variety of services offered to members of the Defence Force located in and around Melbourne. Apart from some medical and surgical conditions requiring specialised treatment and care, the unit acts as an autonomous facility, providing care at all levels. In

1991 alone, 66 329 patients were treated and 1140 operative procedures were performed.

The Hospital provides: clinical services—45 beds in both a high and low dependency environment supported by a single theatre suite, emergency care suite and five medical officer suites with treatment facilities; ancillary services—a full range of pathology services, an accredited laboratory and X-ray facilities; pharmacy support at all levels, along with equipment support for both the hospital and operational requirements; dental service—five dental surgeries and an orthodontic laboratory; environmental health support and advice for all issues related to environmental and occupational health; and administrative support for patients and personnel, serviced by three orderly rooms.

As the Hospital has grown, it has also taken responsibility for providing health support to personnel located at Point Cook and inner Melbourne. Unit personnel staff those two areas, providing outpatient and emergency care services.

In the tradition upheld by past members of the unit deploying to support operations in Malaya and Vietnam, current members made a small but significant contribution to Operations 'Desert Shield' and 'Desert Storm' during the Gulf War, when they were deployed as part of the Task Group Medical Support Element, Hospital Ship USNS *Comfort*, stationed off Kuwait.

The unit has traditionally been responsible for the basic training of medical assistants employed to support nursing activities. Training Flight has assumed responsibility for providing a far wider range of training—advanced life support, resuscitation skills, and nursing officer, medical officer and ancillary staff courses. 6 RAAF Hospital has also been tasked to an Air Transportable Hospital. It is envisaged that when fully established, the unit will deploy to support operational activities. In the past, only small numbers of staff have deployed in support of other units, although on Exercises 'Kangaroo 92' and 'Western Reward', exercise medical support was provided by 6 RAAF Hospital staff with a small number from other units. In both these instances, routine hospital tasks were supported by civilian medical nursing staff.

6 Hospital has a strength of 165 members, including 44 officers. Recent changes in Defence personnel numbers have also meant that a number of civilian health practitioners (doctors and nurses) have been employed to augment uniformed personnel. In addition, civilian support staff are also employed.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

16 November 1942	—Squadron Leader W.M. Lemmon
23 October 1944	—Wing Commander J.C. Laver
20 August 1945	—Wing Commander K.E. Rex
2 January 1946	—Wing Commander J.A. Game
May 1949	—Wing Commander G.C.V. Thompson
15 September 1954	—Squadron Leader D.A.S. Morgan
May 1957	—Squadron Leader P.R. Checucci
3 July 1959	—Squadron Leader A. Cameron
1 September 1961	—Squadron Leader W.H. Taylor
9 April 1962	—Wing Commander R. Plowright
4 January 1965	—Wing Commander W.H. Taylor
17 January 1966	—Squadron Leader R.J.L. Tebbutt
12 September 1969	—Squadron Leader G.T. Goodey
20 January 1971	—Wing Commander J.A. McCusker
3 January 1973	—Wing Commander B.J. Mahony
28 January 1975	—Wing Commander G.T. Goodey
2 March 1976	—Wing Commander B.J. Mahony
6 September 1976	—Wing Commander R.J.L. Tebbutt
20 August 1979	—Wing Commander G.T. Killer
18 December 1980	—Wing Commander G.D. Moller
9 November 1982	—Wing Commander P.H. Shumack
15 February 1984	—Wing Commander D.P. Senior
11 December 1984	—Wing Commander M.L. Dean
14 December 1987	—Squadron Leader R.J. Patten
5 October 1988	—Wing Commander R.I. Fawcett
20 February 1990	—Wing Commander M.R. Dugdale
9 December 1991	—Wing Commander G. Boothby

7 RAAF HOSPITAL

CHRONOLOGY

- 11 January 1943 —formed as RAAF Wing, Royal Adelaide Hospital, at Frome Road, Adelaide, SA
- 27 September 1943 —re-named 7 RAAF Hospital
- 27 August 1946 —Hospital disbanded

NARRATIVE

7 RAAF Hospital formed as RAAF Wing, Royal Adelaide Hospital, at Frome Road, Adelaide, South Australia, on 11 January 1943. Hospital staff were responsible for medical care of RAAF personnel, performing major and minor operations, medical boards, treating infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis and other epidemics.

They were also responsible for WAAAF personnel working at the hospital and all naval cases at 105 Army General Hospital (AGH) as well as Army urological cases.

The nursing staff lived at Zetland House, North Terrace, in Adelaide. The first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader C. Ley who was a medical practitioner.

The official name change to 7 RAAF Hospital occurred on 27 September 1943. Space and bed numbers were always a problem. This was slightly alleviated in January 1944 when 105 AGH allowed a further 25-bed allocation to the Hospital. Facilities were a little run down and improvements were made to the operating theatre which was in a disgraceful condition. 'The Merits of Penicillin' was discussed at a conference of medical staff and consultant surgeons on 21 June 1944.

With the end of the War talks began regarding when the RAAF would hand back the building to the Adelaide Hospital. The WAAAF barracks at St Marks were closed down on 17 December 1945 and the airwomen were obliged to seek private accommodation. In February 1946 a tentative date for the transfer of the hospital at Frome Road to 105 AGH was set as 1 April 1946. All skin cases were transferred to 121 Army General Hospital and eye cases were to be operated on at Royal Adelaide Hospital. Additional accommodation for nursing sisters and medical officers was arranged.

An increase of tuberculosis cases prompted a request to supply 12 additional orderlies to care for RAAF cases at 121 Army General Hospital at Northfield. Orderlies who tested positive were selected to care for these patients. On 17 April 1946 the necessary directive was received from Southern Area Headquarters for the withdrawal of the Frome Road Section. All patients were then transferred. A medical officer was attached at 121 Army Medical Hospital to assist in the care of RAAF chest and skin cases. Sick parades for all Adelaide units were then to be held at the Discharge Squadron, Exhibition Buildings. On 12 May 1946 the headquarters staff transferred from Frome Road to Daws Road, Springbank. On 30 June 1946, 7 RAAF Hospital was absorbed by 105 Army Medical Hospital. On 27 August 1946 the Hospital was officially disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

11 January 1943	—Squadron Leader C. Ley
25 January 1943	—Squadron Leader F.R. Wicks
6 January 1944	—Squadron Leader D.B. Skewes
13 September 1944	—Squadron Leader R.C. Gill
31 January 1945	—Squadron Leader S. Boxall
1 October 1945	—Squadron Leader S. Watsford
1 December 1945	—Squadron Leader H.W. Lyons
2 February 1946	—Squadron Leader N.F. Prescott
1 April 1946	—Flight Lieutenant I. Guenther
28 May 1946	—Flight Lieutenant H.H. Martin
18 June 1946	—Flight Lieutenant A.M. Beech

3 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 15 March 1943 | —formed in Melbourne, Vic. |
| 29 March 1943 | —command transferred to 4 (Maintenance)
Group Headquarters |
| 20 February 1946 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

3 RAAF Postal Unit was formed in Melbourne on 15 March 1943 under the command of 1 Training Group Headquarters. Strength of establishment was 56 personnel. The functions of the Unit were assembling and despatching all classes of mail matter addressed to RAAF units and personnel overseas and in the forward areas. The Unit also investigated complaints of non-delivery of mail from the public or through the then Postmaster-General's Department. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant J.V. Marshall.

On 29 March 1943 the command of 3 Postal Unit was transferred from 1 Training Group Headquarters to 4 (Maintenance) Group Headquarters. On 9 September 1944 the inauguration took place of the Air Letter Service which enabled members of the public to communicate with members of the Commonwealth Forces serving abroad, mainly in India, Egypt, Italy, England and Canada. It was also available for prisoners of war in Europe.

These air letters were conveyed at a cost of seven pence each from Australia to the point of destination wholly by air and thus left the country in a different way from other mail.

With the end of the War the Unit was disbanded on 20 February 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 15 March 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant J.V. Marshall |
| 20 May 1943 | —Pilot Officer C. Sherman |
| 4 October 1945 | —Squadron Leader R.W. Silvester |

4 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 15 May 1943 —formed in Sydney, NSW
28 February 1946 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

4 RAAF Postal Unit was formed at Army House, Sydney, on 15 May 1943, under the command of 5 Maintenance Group. Total establishment was 25 personnel. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant W.J. Vincent. The Unit was also known as 2 RAAF Base Post Office.

The functions of the Unit were assembling and despatching all classes of mail addressed to RAAF units and personnel in forward areas and overseas locations, investigating non-delivery of mail and maintaining a close liaison with civil, Australian Army and United States of America Army posts, with a view to the best utilisation of every available medium for exchange of mails. The Unit also provided a Divisional Postal Officer who visited units in that portion of Eastern Area south of 30 degrees latitude, to organise and supervise postal arrangements and to ensure that all facilities—postal, telephonic and telegraphic—were available to personnel. He also acted as liaison officer between units and the then Postmaster-General's Department.

On 29 June 1943 a mail conveyor belt and chute was completed by the Postmaster-General's Department to improve mail handling. In October 1943, due to the increase in mail, the Unit received notification from RAAF Headquarters of an establishment increase of 10 positions. On 14 February 1944 there was an initial despatch by flying boat of parcel mails to the New Guinea area.

On 11 October 1944 the flying boat *Coolangatta* crashed into Sydney Harbour with 19 bags of airmail for northern destinations. By the afternoon of the same day 16 bags were recovered, and over 6114 letters were dried out, repaired and sent on to the addressees by 15 October. Only 150 letters were recovered without envelopes and were thus unreadable. These were forwarded to the dead letter office for return to sender where possible. On 20 October a further two bags containing 406 letters were recovered when the flying boat beached itself. These were dried out and repaired, then sent on to the addressees by the following

day. One small bag from Adelaide to Brisbane was not recovered and all registered mails were accounted for.

With the War ending on both fronts, the final official mail despatches to Washington, Ottawa and Wellington, New Zealand, were despatched on 2 December 1945. This was due to the termination of the Trans-Pacific Royal Air Force (RAF) Transport Command Service.

On 28 February 1946, 4 RAAF Postal Unit was disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

15 May 1943	—Flight Lieutenant W.J. Vincent
7 September 1944	—Flight Lieutenant E.A. Harley
22 August 1945	—Flight Lieutenant L.J. Ricketts

5 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 20 May 1943 | —established in Brisbane, Qld |
| 18 February 1946 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

On 20 May 1943 5 RAAF Postal Unit formed in Charlotte Street, Brisbane, under the command of 5 (Maintenance) Group Headquarters. The establishment strength was three and the first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant J.V. Marshall. The functions of the Unit were the assembling and despatching of all classes of mail matter addressed to RAAF units and personnel overseas and in forward areas. The Unit also investigated complaints of non-delivery of mail received from the public or from the Postmaster-General's Department and sorting arrangements for interception of mail addressed to personnel posted to a new overseas theatre of war. Unit personnel maintained close liaison with RAAF and civil censorship authorities and supervised postal arrangements, to ensure that every possible postal facility was available to service personnel, to ensure safe delivery of mails and to sell postal notes and stamps.

On 9 August 1943, conveyance of air mails by civil flying boat was introduced between Sydney and Townsville. In October 1944 additional floor space was taken over by the Unit owing to an increase in mail handling. Up to 10 940 registered articles of mail were received at this time. The Unit also assisted the Royal Navy to get its mails to New Guinea in January 1945 until its own postal service was organised.

In January 1946 the handling of mail was given over to the Army and the RAAF Base Post Office ceased to function.

The Unit was disbanded on 18 February 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 20 May 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant J.V. Marshall |
| 19 November 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant E.A. Harley |
| 6 September 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant J.F. Deegan |
| 13 November 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant C.D. Foster |
| 29 September 1945 | —Flight Lieutenant H.O. Cannon |

6 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 15 March 1943 —established in Townsville, Qld
28 November 1945 —Unit ceased to operate

NARRATIVE

6 RAAF Postal Unit was established at Flinders Street, Townsville, on 15 March 1943. It was formed as a separate unit to establish and maintain, within North-Eastern Area, efficient postal facilities, and channels for speedy circulation of mails, to and from all personnel within the area. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant E.A. Harley.

On 22 March 1943 a Qantas flying boat en route from Port Moresby crashed into the sea off Townsville. The plane was carrying 97 bags of mail—40 were recovered from the wreck but most were water damaged, and a further 35 bags were washed up on the beaches near Townsville. All the mail was re-addressed and sent to its destination.

On 29 June 1943 Air Force Post Office 72 was opened at Cairns and 76 opened at Iron Range on 26 May 1943. The Unit was now handling mails for 170 groups in north-eastern Australia and New Guinea.

Up to 12 496 bags of mail were processed per month by June 1944 and a record was created in the value of money orders issued. 76 Air Force Post Office ceased operations at Iron Range on 1 July 1944 and an official mail bag service to Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and New Guinea was introduced. In October 1944 no mail was lifted for forward areas due to adverse weather conditions. On 28 November a flying boat en route from Port Moresby crashed into the sea off Townsville—all bags of mail were saved but suffered water damage.

In June 1945 the counter facilities provided at RAAF Base Post Office Townsville and Cairns were terminated.

The Unit ceased operations on 28 November 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 15 March 1943 —Flight Lieutenant E.A. Harley
10 October 1943 —Flight Lieutenant J.V. Marshall
9 October 1944 —Squadron Leader A. McVeigh
5 April 1945 —Squadron Leader R.W. Silvester

7 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 15 March 1943 | —established at Milne Bay |
| 22 June 1945 | —movement of parent Unit to Lae |
| 17 July 1946 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

7 RAAF Postal Unit was formed at Milne Bay on 15 March 1943. There were also attachments at Port Moresby, Nadzab, Momote, Goodenough, Morotai, Finschhafen and Kiriwina. The Unit was responsible for all mail deliveries between Australia and New Guinea. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant J.F. Deegan.

In March 1944, RAAF Post Office 203 was set up in the Admiralty Islands. Later that month the inauguration took place of an official mail service to Cape Gloucester and Kiriwina. In January 1945 the Commanding Officer proceeded to Milne Bay to investigate a series of registered mail robberies. The thefts were committed at night on 33 Squadron aircraft parked at Gurney Field. The service police also investigated but the culprits were never caught. On 20 January 1945 the Air Force Post Office, Goodenough Island, ceased to function. On 21 January 1945, 7 Postal Unit completed a move to Lae and was fully operational throughout the move. The Goodenough detachment returned to the parent Unit on 29 January. In February 1945 a detachment known as 80 RAAF Post Office commenced operations at Hollandia.

With the end of the war in the Pacific, the post office at Morotai ceased to operate on 1 June 1946, the one in Port Moresby closed on 5 June 1946 and Finschhafen closed on 9 June 1946. A headquarters signal was received for 7 RAAF Postal Unit to cease operations on 30 June 1946. The actual date of disbandment was 17 July 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 15 March 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant J.F. Deegan |
| 3 October 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant C.D. Foster |
| 17 September 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant L.J. Ricketts |
| 14 April 1945 | —Squadron Leader A.M. McVeigh |

8 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

2 June 1943	—formed at Adelaide River, NT
14 May 1944	—moved to Batchelor, NT
3 August 1944	—moved to Darwin, NT
18 February 1946	—Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

On 2 June 1943, 8 RAAF Postal Unit was formed at Adelaide River, Northern Territory. It looked after postal arrangements for Headquarters North-Western Area which included the Northern Territory and nearby islands, as well as some mail for the Pacific. Some of the units and squadrons serviced by the Postal Unit were 452, 457 and 2 Squadrons as well as 7 Repair and Salvage Unit. Outrider post offices were located at Fenton, Melville Bay, Batchelor, Gove, Sattler and Groote Eylandt. The first Commanding Officer was Flying Officer H.O.F. Cannon.

On 14 May 1944 the Unit ceased to operate at Adelaide River and moved to Batchelor. Another move was made on 3 August 1944 this time to Darwin. Personnel were temporarily accommodated at RAAF Station Darwin until a suitable building could be constructed. In November 1944 it was necessary to change the site of the field post office at Sattler as, with the arrival of heavy rains, the building flooded. On the evening of 3 September 1944 mail was delivered to 8 RAAF Postal Unit in a very wet condition. Consequently the following day saw rows of packages and parcels laid out outside the post office drying. This mail was the cargo of a 6 Communications Unit aircraft which was forced down in the Darwin surrounds. The pilot was saved and the mail salvaged. On Christmas Day 1944, 9000 greetings telegrams were received by air mail from Adelaide. They were duly sorted and all distributed by Boxing Day.

In March 1945 the Service Police Unit in Darwin was called to investigate irregular handling of registered articles of mail. On 15 September 1945 a Douglas aircraft operated by 37 Squadron en route from Darwin to Morotai experienced a faulty engine. In order to maintain height and return to Darwin it was necessary to jettison 2000 lbs of troop and official mail for RAAF and Army personnel serving in the Pacific areas.

With the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific the outrider post offices under 8 Postal Unit started to close. On 18 February 1946 the Unit was disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

2 June 1943	—Flying Officer H.O.F. Cannon
25 January 1944	—Flying Officer L.J. Ricketts
5 October 1944	—Flying Officer E.D. Hewett
4 September 1945	—Squadron Leader E.A. Harley
1 January 1946	—Flying Officer G.H. Spencer

9 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 15 March 1943 —formed in Perth, WA
5 December 1945 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

9 RAAF Postal Unit was formed on 15 March 1943, in Perth, Western Australia, under the auspices of Headquarters Western Area. The Unit was responsible for a number of post offices including Derby, Port Headland, Learmonth, Corunna Downs and Noonkanbah and for mail being despatched not only to northern areas of Australia but to the United Kingdom, the Middle East, Ceylon and India.

Overseas mail went by steamer. An airmail service to the UK was started on 16 July 1944, operated by Qantas, and any available space on United States Army and RAF aircraft was utilised for mail to Ceylon, India and the Middle East as there were often complaints from these areas about infrequency of mail delivery. Local internal mail went by train where possible.

During a severe cyclone on 2 February 1945 the post office building at Learmonth was completely destroyed. Practically all mail was eventually recovered, and one mail bag was found 3 miles from the camp site. The contents were restored at the Perth Base Post Office and forwarded to addressees. By March a new building had been erected and the detachment was once more fully operational.

Disruptions to mail services sometimes saw staff at the Unit working long hours to clear backlogs. By June 1945 there was a steady decline in mail going overseas and with the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific field post offices started to close. On 17 November 1945 the Base Post Office closed in Perth. On 19 November 9 RAAF Postal Unit started disbandment. Postal activities were handed over to the Postmaster-General's Department on 5 December 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 15 March 1943 —Squadron Leader A. McVeigh
11 December 1944 —Flight Lieutenant H.P. Williams

10 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2 July 1943 | —formed in Adelaide, SA |
| 31 December 1945 | —ceased to operate as a postal unit |
| 4 February 1946 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

10 RAAF Postal Unit was formed in Adelaide, South Australia, on 2 July 1943. The Unit was fully operational by 19 July 1943 and was formed to process all RAAF mail within South Australia plus mail coming and going from the Pacific area. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant H.P. Williams. The Unit was responsible for smaller post offices at Springbank, Port Pirie, Mallala, Mount Gambier, Gawler and Victor Harbour.

On 5 May 1944 a meeting was held at Air Transport Control Parafield in connection with the conveyance of RAAF official mail by aircraft. On 1 July 1944 the service commenced throughout Australia and New Guinea, postage free. A function was held on 30 June 1944 to celebrate the second anniversary of the formation of the Unit.

The end of hostilities in the Pacific saw the smaller post offices change over from official to non-official status. On 31 December 1945, 10 Postal Unit ceased to operate as a postal unit. On 4 February 1946 it was disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2 July 1943 | —Flight Lieutenant H.P. Williams |
| 23 November 1943 | —Pilot Officer G.E. Phillips |
| 8 March 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant H.O. Cannon |
| 24 September 1945 | —Flight Lieutenant C.E. Phillips |

11 RAAF POSTAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 15 November 1943 —formed at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Vic.
- 6 December 1943 —departed by rail from Melbourne for Townsville
- 13 February 1944 —departed Townsville for Lae
- 8 July 1944 —arrived Noemfoor Island as lodger of 47 Operational Base Unit
- 15 March 1945 —headquarters moved to Morotai
- 24 May 1945 —detachment sent from Morotai to support invasion forces to Labuan
- 12 June 1945 —moved to Labuan
- 8 October 1945 —start of closure of outrider post offices
- 10 February 1946 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

11 RAAF Postal Unit was formed at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on 15 November 1943. The Unit came under the command of Southern Area Headquarters. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant H.P. Williams. The Unit was formed to set up post offices in the Pacific area especially New Guinea. On 6 December 1943 Unit personnel departed from Melbourne by rail on their way to Lae in New Guinea. They stopped at Brisbane on 8 December and departed for Townsville the next day. On arrival in Townsville they became a lodger unit of 1RPP (Reserve Personnel Pool). During their stay, personnel not involved in preparation training were employed at the RAAF Base Post Office, Townsville, and Unit post office, assisting with heavy Christmas mail traffic until 27 December.

On 13 February 1944 Unit personnel departed for Lae on the *Katoomba* arriving at Lae on 19 February. They then moved to Nadzab and completed preparations for operations on 1 March 1944. A detachment was sent to Nadzab. The Unit moved again to Noemfoor Island in July 1944 and it was soon joined by the detachment. It became a lodger unit of 47 Operations Base Unit. A base post office was established.

On 28 December 1944 a special RAAF Boston aircraft was made available for conveyance of mail for all RAAF units in the Philippines—20 000 letters were picked up from Tacloban and Mindoro. In January 1945 a service aircraft caught fire and seven bags of mail from Australia were destroyed. The headquarters of the Unit moved from Noemfoor Island to Morotai on 15 March 1945 leaving three members behind. A detachment was then sent from Morotai to accompany the invasion forces to Labuan and Borneo. The detachment was joined in Labuan by the rest of the Unit in June 1945 where they moved into a permanent building.

In October 1945 closures of the outrider post offices began, due to the end of the war in the Pacific. 11 RAAF Postal Unit was totally disbanded in February 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

24 November 1943	—Flight Lieutenant H.P. Williams
16 October 1944	—Flight Lieutenant W.J. Vincent
1 December 1945	—Flying Officer J. Devine

1 RECRUITING CENTRE

CHRONOLOGY

17 September 1939	—opened at Latrobe Street, Melbourne
29 November 1939	—moved to Flinders Street, Melbourne
22 March 1940	—moved to Queen Street, Melbourne
5 April 1941	—moved to Preston Motors Building, Melbourne
October 1945	—Centre disbanded

NARRATIVE

1 Recruiting Centre was formed at the Radio School Technical College, Latrobe Street, on 17 September 1939. Warrant Officer Hughes was in charge. A move to Flinders Street on 29 November 1939 saw Flying Officer S.K.F. Humphrey appointed Commanding Officer. The aim of the Centre was to recruit personnel for RAAF musterings. The establishment strength was 15 officers, 10 medical and 74 other ranks.

Two mobile recruiting units, 1A and 1B, commenced operations in country districts of Victoria on 16 March 1940 and on 22 March the Centre moved to Vaughan House, Queen Street. On 5 April 1941 the Centre moved to the Preston Motors Building at the corner of Russell and Little Collins Streets. Recruiting of WAAAF commenced in September 1941 for entry into the non-technical musterings such as clerks, teleprinter operators, mess stewards and storehands. In December 1942 the WAAAF opened its own recruiting and enquires bureau in Maples Street, Prahran. In March 1944 WAAAF recruiting was moved to the Women's Employment Bureau. Total recruitments from establishment date were 48 430 ground staff, 13 128 aircrew and 6541 WAAAFs.

In August 1945 the Recruiting Centre ceased to function as a separate unit and was officially disbanded in October.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

8 December 1939	—Flying Officer S.K.F. Humphrey
24 February 1940	—Flight Lieutenant Winter-Irving
27 June 1940	—Flight Lieutenant K.L. Williams
10 November 1941	—Squadron Leader C.B. Ransom
19 October 1942	—Squadron Leader C.deC. Matulich

2 RECRUITING CENTRE

CHRONOLOGY

1 March 1940	—opened at Dalgety's Showrooms at Woolloomooloo, Sydney
December 1940	—2 Mobile Recruiting Unit established
14 October 1945	—Centre disbanded

NARRATIVE

During April 1940 a recruiting detachment from Melbourne, commanded by Flight Lieutenant Paget, was established at Victoria Barracks. The detachment was moved from the Technical College Ultimo, Sydney, to Erskine House, York Street, where 2 Recruiting Centre was formed under the command of Flying Officer H. Bowden-Fletcher. At that time all recruits were transported by road from Richmond. In March 1940 the Centre was transferred to Dalgety's Showrooms at Woolloomooloo. The establishment strength at this time was 84 personnel.

The Recruiting Centre also provided a mobile recruiting unit which toured country towns of New South Wales. A WAAAF mobile recruiting unit was also formed on the commencement of recruitment of WAAAFs in September 1941. These mobile recruiting units were also involved with the recruitment of Air Training Corps cadets.

The Centre held table tennis competitions within the airmen's section. These were played on the roof of the building during lunch breaks, and was very popular. In May 1943 an exhibition was held at David Jones auditorium. It was arranged by members of 5 Maintenance Group and 2 Recruiting Centre. Displays included a war room, signals section, meteorological section, draughtswomen's section, parachute folding and repairs, and stores and repairs. There was also an Air Training Corps inquiry desk and a WAAAF recruiting display.

In March 1944 the number of enlistments increased, especially ground staff. This was due to the increased numbers of people being released from previously reserved occupations which restricted people from joining the armed forces. On 23 March the Commissioner of Police in New South Wales, Mr W. Mackay, officially handed over members of the police force to the Commanding Officer for enlistment as aircrew.

With the cessation of hostilities in Europe in May 1945 the complete suspension of aircrew recruiting was implemented. The public showed little inclination to enlist in the RAAF ground staff or WAAAF. In both branches recruitment proceeded on a reduced scale. In the absence of any publicity, the public were of the opinion that all recruiting for RAAF had ceased. However the Centre carried on and morale of all personnel remained at a high level.

In August 1945 the war in the Pacific ended so all recruiting and enlistments were terminated. The Recruiting Centre was disbanded on 14 October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

15 March 1940	—Flying Officer H. Bowden-Fletcher
12 August 1940	—Squadron Leader E.S. Astridge
10 March 1941	—Squadron Leader G. Mitchell
12 January 1944	—Squadron Leader T.A. Humble
20 April 1944	—Squadron Leader H.V. Dangar

3 RECRUITING CENTRE

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 29 September 1939 | —commenced operations in Brisbane, Qld |
| 4 December 1939 | —officially formed as a unit |
| 2 November 1945 | —final entry in Unit History Record |

NARRATIVE

3 Recruiting Centre commenced activity in Brisbane on 29 September 1939, enlisting 36 recruits on 6 November 1939.

The unit was officially formed on 4 December 1939, under the administration of the adjutant, Flying Officer C.G. Williams, who was replaced by Pilot Officer P.J.B. Dawkins on 19 August 1941. The first recorded commander was Squadron Leader K.L. Williams, who assumed the appointment during December 1941.

Mobile recruiting teams ranged throughout Queensland, visiting centres such as Mareeba, Cairns, Ingham, Townsville, Ayr, Bowen, Rockhampton, Goondiwindi, Atherton, Charters Towers and Hughenden, assessing applicants for enlistment in the RAAF. By August 1943, the strength of the unit was 23 officers, 54 airmen and 50 airwomen. The establishment for the unit totalled 221, so it is evident that the unit was working hard to meet its targets.

In May 1945, aircrew enlistments ceased, and those who were waiting for enlistment were offered ground crew careers. In October 1945, postings out of the unit commenced, and the last entry in the Unit History Record was made on 2 November 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| December 1941 | —Squadron Leader K.L. Williams |
| 9 February 1943 | —Squadron Leader T.A. Humble |
| 1 March 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant K. Millbrook |

4 RECRUITING CENTRE

CHRONOLOGY

- 24 September 1939 —established at Perth Technical College
- 21 November 1939 —moved to Yorkshire House, St George's Terrace
- 17 March 1940 —Mobile Recruiting Unit 4A commenced operations in Kalgoorlie
- 18 November 1940 —operation of Mobile Recruiting Unit 4A ceased
- 28 February 1941 —moved to ANA House, St George's Terrace
- 10 October 1945 —Centre disbanded

NARRATIVE

4 Recruiting Centre was established on 24 September 1939 at Perth Technical College but later moved to Yorkshire House, St George's Terrace. On 21 November 1939, Flying Officer A. Stewart took command. The establishment was 34 personnel including six officers and five medical staff. In March 1940 Mobile Recruiting Unit 4A commenced operations in Kalgoorlie. This unit operated from a train. By November 1940 it ceased operations as a mobile unit. After this staff from Perth visited on a regular basis all areas within Western Australia. In December 1940 a thorough re-organisation was performed to improve the running of the Centre.

In February 1941 the Centre moved to ANA House in St George's Terrace, Perth. On 3 March 1941 recruiting for the WAAAF was introduced for the non-technical musterings. By September 1942 there was a great falling off of applications for the RAAF and WAAAF owing to manpower regulations.

In October 1942 lectures began for all personnel of the Centre on ship and aircraft recognition. Physical fitness and unarmed defence courses were run for the WAAAF.

In January 1943 the first two members of the WAAAF in Western Australia were promoted to sergeant. A recruiting drive was intensified for the WAAAF in the same month. Appeals were made at interval time at the movies and radio broadcasts went through till February. Other

personnel from the Centre made regular visits to 9 Elementary Flying School to find out about the work performed by various musteringings.

In February 1945 it was noted by the Commanding Officer that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable applicants for the aircrew musteringings. Even the Air Training Corps cadet numbers appeared to have dropped to such an extent that it was brought to the notice of the 5 Wing Air Training Corps commander.

With the cessation of hostilities in Europe recruiting numbers dropped further. In August 1945 when peace was declared with Japan, all recruiting activities ceased. The Centre was disbanded in October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

21 November 1939	—Flying Officer A. Stewart
4 December 1940	—Squadron Leader C.deC. Matulich
3 March 1942	—Flight Lieutenant H.V. Dangar
22 May 1944	—Squadron Leader E. Hamilton

5 RECRUITING CENTRE

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 October 1939 | —opened at School of Mines, Adelaide |
| 1 December 1939 | —moved to North Terrace |
| 19 March 1942 | —moved to King William Street, Adelaide |
| 8 October 1945 | —Centre disbanded |

NARRATIVE

On 1 October 1939 5 Recruiting Centre was opened at the School of Mines, Frome Road, Adelaide. The first Commanding Officer was Flying Officer R.S. Davey.

On 1 December 1939 the unit moved to the old Legislative Council building in North Terrace. A Mobile Recruiting Unit 5A in the form of a train began operation in the country areas of South Australia in January 1940. This ceased operation in November 1940 and personnel from the Adelaide Centre did the recruiting tours from then on.

In March 1941 recruiting of 17-year-old males began for pre-enlistment training for aircrew and trainee wireless operators. In May of that year recruiting showed a marked increase after an intensive campaign. When hostilities commenced with Japan in December 1941, such was the influx of potential recruits that the Centre began operating 24 hours a day. The Centre moved to new premises in King William Street, Adelaide, in March 1942. In April 1943 the first WAAAFs were recruited in South Australia.

With the cessation of hostilities in August 1945 and recruiting put on hold, an instruction was received for disbandment of the Centre. Staff were posted and the Centre disbanded on 8 October 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 6 November 1939 | —Flying Officer R.S. Davey |
| 6 May 1940 | —Flight Lieutenant J.R. Gordon |
| 16 February 1941 | —Squadron Leader E.G. McMurtle |
| 4 June 1942 | —Flight Lieutenant K. Millbrook |
| 12 February 1944 | —Squadron Leader C.M. Feez |
| 9 February 1944 | —Squadron Leader L.H.D. Kelly |

6 RECRUITING CENTRE

CHRONOLOGY

- 22 September 1939 —opened at the Technical College, Melville Street, Hobart, Tas.
- 10 April 1940 —officer stationed at Launceston to handle recruiting in the north
- August 1945 —Centre disbanded

NARRATIVE

6 Recruiting Centre was formed with an initial establishment of six personnel at the Technical College, Melville Street, Hobart. The first Commanding Officer was Flying Officer S.K. Humphrey. A country recruiting facility was set up also as an outpost of the Centre in April 1940 in Launceston, at the Civil Defence Legion, Cameron Street. This recruiting facility only operated at monthly intervals.

For the first few months at the Centre, medicals had to be held at the private surgery of one of the RAAF doctors due to the lack of facilities. As Tasmania was a smaller State than the mainland States, recruiting figures were not as high but the staff worked tirelessly to recruit as many as they could. In January 1941 there was a marked increase in enlistments and the small staff were working at high pressure to cope, up to 70 hours per week. The situation was aggravated by the amount of time spent travelling by train for mobile recruiting staff. Permission was granted to use the Air Force tender (truck) to save time and money. May 1941 saw an extensive publicity and advertising campaign through the press, cinema and radio. In June 1941 the education standard for aircrew was dropped which caused an increase in applicants. Government manpower restrictions later that year made it even harder for the RAAF to recruit. A visit to Hobart by an Australian-built Beaufort bomber in September 1941 did not stimulate recruiting and the expected rush of candidates was not forthcoming. In October 1941 the Tasmanian Air Training Corps was formed and they became part of the Centre.

In July 1942 there was a large decrease in enquires for the WAAAF. This was due to the intensive recruiting campaigns by the other two Services. In 1943 manpower restrictions were further increased and in September a shortage of women for small fruit crop harvesting and jam

factory work caused another downturn in WAAAF recruiting. In September 1943 a canteen was opened at the Centre. This was not only used by staff, but by quite a number of aircrew personnel who called to collect their entitlements of beer and cigarettes.

In May 1944 the Recruiting Centre incorporated a rehabilitation and discharge section. In October the Government announced that 15 000 men were to be released from the Air Force. The increased workload drew pleas for more staff to cope with the applications for discharge and various problems which were connected to it. By December 1944 lack of transport to the mainland became another deterrent to enlistment. The future of the Air Training Corps was also in doubt because aircrew enlistments were discontinued.

In July 1945 it was becoming apparent that, because of the drop in numbers in recruiting and the possibility of the war in the Pacific coming to an end, a recruiting centre in Hobart was not really necessary. Discharge work was the main thing keeping it opened. The mobile recruiting team could handle any recruiting queries. This information was passed to a higher authority and the Centre was disbanded at the end of August 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

13 November 1939	—Flying Officer S.K. Humphrey
10 June 1940	—Flight Lieutenant F.B. Willmott
1 November 1940	—Flight Lieutenant R.W. Reeman

1 RESERVE PERSONNEL POOL

CHRONOLOGY

- 12 November 1942 —formed at Townsville, Qld
16 December 1942 —moved to Aitkenvale, Qld
15 April 1946 —Pool disbanded

NARRATIVE

1 Reserve Personnel Pool (1RPP) became a separate unit on 12 November 1942, at 'The Weir', near Townsville. During the first month of operation, 1101 personnel were posted in and 1013 posted out. A canteen was introduced and good stocks obtained. During the month working parties were supplied to the Army, for petrol and bomb loading; to a shipping and stores unit; to an air transport command; and to the contractor of the new camp site.

After heavy rain flooded tents during December, the unit moved to a new camp site at Aitkenvale. During the first few months, time was spent on constructing buildings and establishing the new site. Several courses were run during December, with training given in field craft; knowledge and use of rifles, bayonets, sub-machine guns and grenades; and advanced aerodrome defence training.

During April 1943, Air Training Corps personnel attended a camp at the unit, and received valuable instruction in service routine and defence training.

A total of 666 personnel were moved from the unit by air, and 115 by sea, during May 1943. Destinations of those flown out included Port Moresby, Milne Bay, and Horn Island.

Plans were made during June to prepare a vegetable garden, to be worked by unit personnel, so that fresh vegetables could be supplied to units in the North-Eastern Area. The unit chapel was dedicated on 26 August 1944, and during July and August, inter-unit tennis was played.

Malay language lectures were conducted during August 1944. Ten boxing tournaments, four unit dances, four concerts, the mobile broadcasting show and four visits by the RAAF mobile cinema were also held during the month.

During September 1944, 2337 personnel arrived at the unit, and 2550 departed on posting to units in North-Eastern Area, Northern Command, North-Western Area, 10 Operational Group and Southern Area.

On 29 October, a new picture theatre with a seating capacity of 1200 was opened at the unit.

1 Reserve Personnel Pool was disbanded on 15 April 1946. Since the unit's formation in November 1942, 133 606 personnel were moved through the unit, 66 804 in and the same number out.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

12 November 1942	—Squadron Leader F.A. Martyn
17 July 1944	—Squadron Leader A.A. Doyle
19 September 1945	—Squadron Leader S.S. Evans
27 October 1945	—Squadron Leader A.H. Steele

2 RESERVE PERSONNEL POOL

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 12 July 1944 | —formed at Coomalie Creek, NT |
| 19 September 1945 | —moved to Winnellie, NT |
| 30 January 1946 | —Pool disbanded |

NARRATIVE

2 Reserve Personnel Pool (2RPP) was formed at Coomalie on 12 July 1944. When the working pool responsible for construction of unit buildings was withdrawn on 19 July, this work became the responsibility of 2RPP. Burning off undergrowth and removing dead timber was a necessary task in the preparation of the camp site.

2RPP moved to Winnellie on 19 September 1945, where activities such as billiards, table tennis, badminton and cricket kept personnel occupied whilst awaiting onward movement. During October 1945, 2727 personnel were posted in and 2408 were posted out of the pool.

On 20 January 1946, work began to clear up the camp site prior to disbandment at the end of January 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 12 July 1944 | —Flying Officer James |
| 4 October 1944 | —Flying Officer Casey |
| 20 December 1945 | —Flight Lieutenant C.W. Holmes |

3 RESERVE PERSONNEL POOL

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 13 December 1944 | —formed on Noemfoor Island |
| 1 February 1945 | —moved to Morotai Island |
| December 1945 | —last entry in Unit History Record |

NARRATIVE

3 Reserve Personnel Pool (3RPP) was formed on Noemfoor Island on 13 December 1944. The first few months were spent in building a camp and obtaining equipment and supplies.

3RPP moved to Morotai on 1 February 1945 and became fully self-contained at the end of March 1945. With the flow of personnel steadily increasing, a unit canteen was opened, and recreational facilities and reading matter were provided for the airmen's recreation hut. In May 1945, a PA system was installed and musical programs were broadcast.

Due to the expansion of the unit by June 1945, it was necessary to construct a new camp site about 1 mile from the present location. During September all tents and buildings were removed from the old site to the new site. The old site was then cleared.

By November 1945 most transient personnel had been posted away from the unit, leaving only clerical staff. The camp site was abandoned and cleared, and the clerical staff moved to 11 Group camp site to prepare for disbandment.

The last entry in the 3RPP Unit History Record was made in December 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 19 December 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant J.R. Thornton |
| 28 November 1945 | —Pilot Officer L.C. Atherton |
| 17 December 1945 | —Wing Commander A.T. Cowdell |

12 SURVEY AND DESIGN UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

1 January 1943	—formed in Melbourne, Vic.
1 February 1943	—moved to Katherine, NT
6 August 1943	—moved to Coomalie Creek, NT
1 September 1944	—Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

12 Survey and Design Unit was formed at Royal Park in Melbourne, Victoria, on 1 January 1943, with an establishment of 31 personnel which included two engineers. The Unit was involved in the field survey, architectural design, field work, engineering services and drafting for aerodromes and camp sites of RAAF units based in northern Australia. There was also a mapping section. It was a lodger unit of 61 Wing and the first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant J. Yeaman.

The Unit moved to Katherine in the Northern Territory in February 1943 and commenced work on different sites such as Tindal, Drysdale, Batchelor, Venn, 9 Stores Depot, and 307 Radio Station. There were many problems with shortages of general hands and this made it difficult to operate efficient survey parties—nevertheless all work was completed.

On 29 May 1943 Flying Officer Olney died from injuries received in a flying accident on the north coast of Arnhem Land. He was returning from reconnaissance duties at South Goulburn Island.

On 27 June 1943 Unit strength increased when a detachment of 85 personnel from 8 Mobile Works Squadron arrived to stage there while working on the new American camps at Manbulloo.

The Unit also dealt with standards for incinerators and grease traps. On 6 August 1943 the Unit moved once more, this time to Coomalie Creek. There was an increased demand for the work and shortages of manpower continued but the work was completed.

In accordance with a North-Western Area instruction on 18 August 1944, the Unit was disbanded on 1 September 1944.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

13 February 1943	—Squadron Leader J. Yeoman
19 November 1943	—Squadron Leader A.W. Steel

13 SURVEY AND DESIGN UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

1 January 1943	—established at Royal Park, NSW
1 March 1943	—departed for Port Moresby
15 July 1944	—Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

13 Survey and Design Unit was established at Royal Park in Sydney, administered by Air Force Headquarters. The job of the 38 Unit personnel was reconnaissance, survey and design of aerodromes. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant E.G. Clifford.

On 1 and 2 March 1943 the Unit left for an overseas posting in Port Moresby. In August 1943, Headquarters 13 Survey and Design Unit departed Port Moresby for Kiriwina via Goodenough Island, where surveys of camp sites for 76, 77, 79 and 30 Squadrons, 41 Operations Base Unit and 62 Works Wing Headquarters were started. A survey and design of dispersal areas for medium bombers and fighters on the west side of Vivigani strip was completed. Unit personnel were also involved in the preparation of working drawings for the completion of a wharf in Port Moresby. In Kiriwina they were involved in the location of sites and the preparation and supervision of the erection of camp buildings.

On 8 April 1944 Unit personnel proceeded to Cape Cretin where they began a trial run in a convoy of Landing Ship Tanks, carrying heavy equipment and personnel (both combat and engineers) and culminating in a practice landing near Lae. This included unloading equipment and disembarkation of personnel. Arrangements were somewhat upset as the proposed camp area proved untenable due to the swampy nature of the ground and they returned to Cape Cretin. On the night of 13 April 1944 they departed Cape Cretin for tactical manoeuvres in a convoy. They arrived at Buna on 14 April and returned to Cape Cretin on 18 April.

The Unit ceased to function on 15 July 1944. All survey and design works were taken over by 62 Airfield Construction Wing.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

9 January 1943	—Flight Lieutenant E.G. Clifford
9 April 1943	—Flying Officer L.N. Jamieson

10 WORKS SUPPLY UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 21 December 1942 | —formed at Royal Park, Melbourne |
| 13 January 1943 | —moved to Bankstown, NSW |
| 16 February 1943 | —arrived at Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea |
| 1 March 1944 | —prepared for move to Lae |
| 30 June 1944 | —moved to Tadjil awaiting movement to
Noemfoor |
| 10 August 1944 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

10 Works Supply Unit was formed at Camp Poll, Royal Park, Melbourne, on 21 December 1942 with an initial establishment of 11 officers. The first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader M.G. Murchinson. On 13 January 1943 the Unit moved to Bankstown, New South Wales, en route to Townsville and then to Milne Bay; during its time at Bankstown the Unit was a lodger unit of 2 Air Park. From Bankstown equipment was loaded onto a ship called the *Liberty*. The Unit reached Townsville on 9 February, and Milne Bay on 16 February. On 19 February 1943, the Unit moved to its permanent camp site at Milne Bay and commenced operations.

Unit duties included the setting up of sawmills to produce pre-cut huts, salvage work and a supply base. Inspections were made by 9 Operational Group. On 24 March 1943 a raid was made on the Unit camp site by two Japanese aircraft but there were no casualties. At Goodenough Island salvage work began on two Japanese barges. A sawmill detachment was also set up at Nadzab. On 17 December 1943 the Unit was advised that it would be moving to Lae leaving a detachment behind at Milne Bay. In June 1944 another sawmill was set up at Aitape as well as an engineer supply dump for both RAAF and United States Army engineer units. There was a great turnover of supplies such as timber, welded mesh, nails and other hardware.

The supply base at Lae was prepared for the next forward move and any unserviceable equipment was returned to the mainland. The detachment provided a large number of piles of sawn wood which was used mainly in bridge and jetty construction. On 20 June 1944 the Unit



*Air Command Band pose
before an F/A-18*



*Flight Lieutenant 'Tubby'
Fellows, Air Command Band*



1 Personnel Depot, 1946. Top L-R: Dental Section; Medical Section. Bottom L-R: main entrance; waiting for clearances



4 Hospital, Butterworth



A Red Cross bus waits for patients from a medivac Hercules



Surgery—a respirator in use



Oxygen testing at the Institute of Aviation Medicine



Flight Lieutenant La Estie Bav, the first woman to become a RAAF dentist, January 1977



Dental assistant Corporal Jackie Eyre



The RAAF Museum Lockheed Ventura is positioned for flight



Warrant Officer D. Gardner (right), curator of the RAAF Museum, discusses plans with an assistant



Victorian University Squadron group at East Sale, May 1968



University squadron cadets are given details of the engine fitted to the Vampire aircraft

was advised that it would move forward within a week. The men were most unhappy as they had already completed 16 months in New Guinea. However the sawmill was packed up in a day which was indeed a feat and was ready to be loaded onto a Landing Ship Tank. At about 11 o'clock that same night word was received that the time-expired personnel would not move forward. Efforts were made over the following few days to arrange postings and 171 men and two officers were transferred to 6 Mobile Works Squadron. This provided 'un-timed' men from 6 Mobile Works Squadron to transfer to the Unit.

At the beginning of July 1944 the Unit was at Tadjji in British New Guinea awaiting shipping for movement to Noemfoor Island. A sawmill detachment landed on the island along with 5 Mobile Works Squadron on 4 July 1944. A specialist on New Guinea forests accompanied the detachment as an adviser. After some mechanical delays they were able to be set up quickly. On 6 July 1944 a wing commander from RAAF Headquarters advised that a re-organisation of the Works Wing was pending and that the Unit would disband and combine with 4 Works Maintenance Unit to form 4 Airfield Construction Squadron. The Unit embarked for Noemfoor Island on 12 and 13 July bringing forward 1200 tons of building material and equipment. Bad weather was experienced but 6 Mobile Works Squadron gave considerable assistance. The Unit disembarked on 16 July. All cargo was off-loaded, a supply dump was set up near the landing area and a detachment was left there. The remainder moved to a camp area some miles distant. The messing staff had to set up a temporary kitchen and all were fed. In the next few days advice was received from 62 Airfield Construction Wing Headquarters that the Unit would now disband.

On 31 July 1944 the postings of all personnel were received, the majority going to 4 Airfield Construction Squadron. The Unit disbanded on 10 August 1944. In its 20 months of operation it was connected, either as detachments or as a full unit, to almost all of the middle and final stages of the New Guinea campaign.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

7 January 1943	—Squadron Leader M.G. Murchinson
27 August 1943	—Squadron Leader E. Longstaff
9 December 1943	—Squadron Leader L.C. Dawkins

11 WORKS SUPPLY UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 16 January 1943 | —formed at Gawler, SA |
| 16 March 1943 | —proceeded to Darwin to set up camp at Pine Creek |
| 1 December 1943 | —moved to Nine Mile Creek, Edith River |
| 4 September 1944 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

11 Works Supply Unit was formed at Gawler, South Australia, on 16 January 1943 with an establishment of four officers and 20 other ranks. The first Commanding Officer was Flying Officer A.B. Overend. The Unit was established to provide salvage work and sawmills for prefabricated building construction, drill bores for water supply and administer general distribution of stores and fuel. On 16 March 1943 the Unit was moved to Pine Creek down from Darwin in the Northern Territory and was under the control of North-Western Area. On 7 May 1943 the Unit sunk a bore to enable a regular water supply to the camp. A reconnaissance was made of the surrounding area for forests to enable sawmilling operations to commence. Two mills were set up, one at Pine Creek, the other at Edith River.

On 6 July 1943 the Unit was called upon to refuel two Spitfires that landed on Macdonald strip during a raid on Fenton. On 12 July 1943 the Salvage Section proceeded to Darwin to commence salvage work on RAAF Darwin.

Among its activities the Unit had a farm which produced tomatoes, beans, cabbages, lettuce, pumpkins, eggs and goats milk. A piggery was also established. The output from the sawmill was used for the pre-fabrication section.

The Unit also played Australian Rules and in August erected a marquee in the camp site for use as an airmen's recreation hut.

On 1 December 1943 the Unit was moved from Pine Creek to Nine Mile Creek. The Edith River mill continued to operate. On 18 April 1944 a Spitfire crashed near Edith River. An ambulance and the Commanding Officer attended the site where the body of the pilot was located. He was

assumed to be from 54 Squadron. Guards were posted at the scene until the body was recovered and an investigation held.

Also in April 1944 a member of the Unit was Mentioned in Despatches. Sergeant C.V. Reade's citation was promulgated on the Commanding Officer's parade. The sergeant was responsible for the loading and unloading of ships, rail and road transport during the Unit's move to the Northern Territory. The speed and efficiency with which the work was carried out contributed greatly to the success of the vital works program. After the Unit commenced functioning, Sergeant Reade was appointed senior non-commissioned officer in charge of the Equipment Section controlling the movements of all works materials in and out of the area. The lack of adequate equipment made the work arduous and unpleasant, but Sergeant Reade's example inspired the men to efforts far above normal expectations. Up to 5000 tons per week were manhandled out of the dump alone and Sergeant Reade displayed outstanding loyalty, determination and devotion to duty.

On 4 September 1944 the Unit was disbanded. All records were despatched to 61 Airfield Construction Wing Headquarters. Equipment was transferred to 14 Airfield Construction Squadron.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

16 January 1943	—Flying Officer A.B. Overend
15 October 1943	—Flying Officer V.G. Knight
20 May 1944	—Flight Lieutenant K.M. Hunerbein
5 June 1944	—Flight Lieutenant R.L. Daws

AIR COMMAND BAND

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1932 | —part-time band formed at RAAF Richmond, NSW |
| 1969 | —re-named RAAF 1 Regional Band |
| 1974 | —disbanded but later reinstated under the new title RAAF Operational Command Band |
| 1988 | —re-named Air Command Band |
| November 1994 | —based at Richmond, NSW |

NARRATIVE

In 1932 the Air Command Band started its life as the RAAF Richmond Band. The Band was formed by the then Commanding Officer of RAAF Richmond, Squadron Leader Bostock, and was a part-time brass band. This group of part-time musicians came from different trades within the RAAF and was under the direction of Leading Aircraftman Ern Keller. As the part-time band grew in numbers and expertise, it became very busy and was comparable to most full-time Army bands.

The first band officer was Flying Officer Richard, who was then the base equipment officer. Over the years, as old members left and new members joined, the Band featured in many spheres, including royal visits, Government House investitures and in 1940 it escorted 6 Squadron to the station on its departure for Milne Bay to join the war effort, and held a concert for the Empire Air Training Scheme contingent bound for Canada. The Band was also asked to accompany Gracie Field, the then well known singer, at a welfare/comfort concert which was held at the Sydney Town Hall. In 1946 Flight Lieutenant 'Tubby' Fellows became bandmaster.

In 1969 it became a full-time band. Starting with 12 musicians, it was known as the RAAF 1 Regional Band, and at that time woodwind instruments were introduced. Pilot Officer M. Butcher was the first Director of Music.

Due to government policy the Band was disbanded early in 1974, but successful lobbying saw it reinstated later that year under the new title of the RAAF Operational Command Band. It was then under the direction

of Flight Lieutenant Archie Burt. In 1978, a new director, Squadron Leader Tom Cooper, was appointed. He was a graduate of the Royal Military School of Music (Kneller Hall) London. With the re-organisation of RAAF Air Headquarters in 1988, the Band was re-named the Air Command Band.

The main musical duties of the Band include attendance at royal visits, vice regal functions, concerts, school recitals and parades. These varying tasks require Band members to be extremely versatile in order to cope with the wide spectrum of playing styles.

Air Command Band now includes a full concert band, an 18-piece jazz band, a seven-piece combo known as 'Touch and Go', a brass quintet known as 'Jet Stream' and a woodwind quintet known as 'Windshear'.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1932	—Leading Aircraftman E. Keller (Bandmaster)
1935	—Corporal Naylor (Bandmaster)
1946–1955	—Flight Lieutenant 'Tubby' Fellows
No information recorded on who led the Band from 1955 to 1969	
1 March 1969	—Pilot Officer M. Butcher
October 1974	—Flight Lieutenant A. Burt
1 January 1978	—Squadron Leader T. Cooper
1 November 1988	—Flight Lieutenant D.C. Worrall

AIR DEFENCE GROUND EQUIPMENT SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 December 1972 | —Headquarters Operational Command Detachment 'E' established at RAAF Base Williamtown, NSW |
| 20 January 1975 | —moved to RAAF Base Amberley, Qld |
| 30 April 1979 | —moved back to Williamtown |
| 2 February 1987 | —re-named Software Development Unit |
| 1 June 1988 | —re-named Air Defence Ground Equipment Software Development Unit |
| November 1994 | —based at Williamtown, NSW |

NARRATIVE

Headquarters Operational Command Detachment 'E' (HQOCDetE) was formed on 1 December 1972 and was located at 3 Control and Reporting Unit at RAAF Base Williamtown. 3 Control and Reporting Unit provided accommodation, orderly room and messing facilities and the Unit assumed the responsibility of Air Defence computer programming and development.

Flight Lieutenant O.R.F. Bartrop was appointed temporary Officer Commanding from inception until 18 December 1972, when Flight Lieutenant J.W. Walsh was appointed as Commanding Officer.

Headquarters Operational Command Detachment 'E' moved to the 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit (MCRU) compound at RAAF Base Amberley on 20 January 1975. The re-location was due to the increased operational commitment at 3CRU which meant that Unit members did not have enough system time to fulfil their function of maintaining and developing the software for the 'Hubcap' Air Defence System.

In 1979, the re-organisation of 3CRU and 114MCRU under Project 'Recap' effectively left the Unit at Amberley with no Air Defence System to conduct software development with, and the detachment was re-located with 3CRU on 30 April 1979.

On 2 February 1987 the Software Development Unit (SDU) was formed at RAAF Base Williamstown, assuming the duties previously carried out by Headquarters Operational Command Detachment 'E'. The Software Development Unit was tasked with the research and development of all computer software associated with the Air Defence element of the RAAF. Additionally, the Unit was made responsible for the management of these systems; and had the need arisen, the production and issue of modified/updated systems to satisfy the operational and maintenance elements of the RAAF.

On 1 June 1988 SDU was re-named the Air Defence Ground Equipment Software Development Unit (ADGESDU).

Their greatest challenge to date is Project 'AFOR 5320'. This project required that the Myriad Air Defence System computers at 2CRU and 3CRU be replaced by a more maintainable computer and that, where possible, system enhancements be incorporated in the upgrade.

Air Defence Ground Equipment Software Development Unit became the project controller, designer, implementer and tester, a task which has tested and will continue to test the resources of the Unit.

At the end of Project 'AFOR 5320', it is expected that the hands-on approach to Air Defence System programming will be much diminished. The next generation of Air Defence systems will be contractor maintained and the Unit is expected to simply oversee specification issue, installation and test and acceptance. As the enormity and complexity of the tasks reduce, it is foreseen that so too will the manning strength. As all these things diminish, it is likely that the Unit will cease to exist as an independent identity.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

19 December 1972	—Flight Lieutenant J.W. Walsh
December 1976	—Squadron Leader K. Barnes
10 January 1978	—Squadron Leader D.L. McFarlane
9 January 1979	—Squadron Leader G.F. Scurr
22 June 1981	—Squadron Leader T.E. Deecke
23 July 1985	—Squadron Leader P.J. Bevan
30 January 1989	—Squadron Leader D.M. Gunson
1 March 1990	—Squadron Leader P.G. Smith
13 January 1992	—Flight Lieutenant D. Davison

AIRCRAFT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Prove to Accomplish



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 December 1943 | —1 Air Performance Unit established at Laverton, Vic. |
| September 1946 | —moved to Point Cook, Vic. |
| September 1947 | —name changed to Aircraft Research and Development Unit |
| October 1948 | —moved back to Laverton |
| February 1977 | —moved to Edinburgh, SA |
| November 1994 | —based at Edinburgh, SA |

NARRATIVE

1 Air Performance Unit was formed at Laverton, Victoria, on 1 December 1943, absorbing personnel from the Special Duties and Performance Flight of 1 Aircraft Depot. The function of the Unit was to undertake: type trials of aircraft from local production and overseas; flight trials of aircraft modifications and ancillary equipment; the evolution of tactical methods of employing aircraft and equipment; full scale flight testing as an auxiliary to, or in conjunction with, laboratory research; co-operation with government departments, manufacturers and scientific research institutions; and other duties as directed by the Air Board.

Trials being undertaken during December 1943 are a good indication of the diverse duties undertaken by the Unit then, and by the Aircraft Research and Development Unit now. The trials included performance testing of the Spitfire Mk VIII, Ventura take-off tests, Boomerang rate of

roll, drogue towing with Vengeance tug aircraft, Hudson camera installation, check on a slow Beaufighter, calibration of radar controlled searchlights, wing gun installations on Wirraway, Rebecca/Eureka radar, glide path indicator and miscellaneous trials including supply dropping, parachute testing, modified Beaufort flare chutes, Spitfire tyre durability, dive bombing sights for the Vengeance and camouflage light filters. At this stage there were 32 aircraft at the Unit undergoing trials.

Trials were not only restricted to Allied aircraft. Squadron Leader D.R. Cuming, who was to become one of the RAAF's most highly respected test pilots, flew tests on captured Japanese 'Oscar' and 'Tony' fighter aircraft on behalf of the Technical Evaluation Board.

During December 1944 a Fighter Tactical Development Flight was established and, on 11 December 1944, Captain Fitzgibbon and Lieutenant Commander Blake of the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm visited regarding the possibility of the Unit undertaking trials on behalf of their Service, although there is no evidence that this eventuated.

The end of hostilities did not curtail trials, but expanded their scope, both technically and geographically. The Unit was involved with test flying the CA-15 prototype and, in November 1946 and in the period January to March 1947, undertook tropical trials of a Royal Air Force Meteor F Mk 3 at Darwin. It was during these trials that, on 14 February 1947, Flight Lieutenant J.S. Gooch crash-landed the aircraft, causing considerable damage to the fuselage. On 15 March a Lincoln, flown by Wing Commander Marshall, flew to the sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island, which was photographed, to test the operation of the aircraft under extreme cold conditions. During December 1948 a Sea Hornet commenced tropical trials in Darwin which lasted a full year.

The Unit was re-named Aircraft Research and Development Unit during September 1947, and moved back to Laverton during October 1948. After the move, it operated two detachments, 'A' at Mallala, South Australia, and 'B' at Richmond, New South Wales. The latter was involved with cloud seeding experiments under the auspices of CSIRO scientists. This association was reinforced in February 1957, when Squadron Leader W.A.N. Nichol, his crew and scientists, flew in a Dakota to Pearce and Richmond to collect debris associated with meteor showers.

Detachment 'C' was established at Edinburgh, and it was from here that Pilot Officer A.J. Bierman was killed when his Meteor T Mk 7 crashed near Golden Grove.

The Unit moved to Edinburgh, South Australia, during the period January–February 1977.

Testing has been interspersed with drama. Flight Lieutenant W.M. Simmonds force-landed his Sabre on the port main wheel and nose wheel amid a flurry of foam, on 10 December 1962. On 20 April 1966, Squadron Leader R.G. Green lost power in Mirage A3-2 whilst flying at 23 000 feet, and force-landed at Avalon, touching down several yards short of the under-run. Flight Lieutenant R.V. Richardson successfully ejected from A3-4 2 miles north of Avalon after an engine failure during final approach on 3 August 1972 and, on 3 May 1974, Flight Lieutenant T.J. McCormick ejected from Mirage A3-76 after an undercarriage failure. On 12 May 1990, Flight Lieutenant G.K. Donovan was killed when a Nomad aircraft crashed near Mallala.

Aircraft Research and Development Unit has flown trials and development sorties on every aircraft in the Air Force inventory, including F-111C, Mirage, Macchi, Kiowa, CT4-A and the venerable Dakota. The Unit has been involved in weapons trials on the 2.75 inch rocket, Matra R550 missile and Kuringa cluster bomb. During May 1987, Macchi aircraft from ARDU flew close support missions for the Army in the Cultana range area, and the Unit delivered the final Mirage aircraft to Woomera, for storage, on 8 February 1989.

The Unit is still undertaking the role set down 50 years ago with professionalism.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1 December 1943	—Squadron Leader J.H. Harper
March 1946	—Wing Commander G.D. Marshall
30 April 1951	—Wing Commander F.J.P. Wood
14 January 1952	—Wing Commander D.R. Cuming
March 1953	—Wing Commander J.R. Lavers
21 December 1953	—Wing Commander D.R. Cuming
26 March 1956	—Wing Commander G.H.N. Shiells
November 1956	—Wing Commander J.A. Rowland
June 1959	—Group Captain I.F. Rose
1 August 1960	—Group Captain P.A. Parker
20 December 1963	—Group Captain L.H. Williamson
10 April 1966	—Group Captain J.P. Graney
10 February 1969	—Group Captain J.D. Espie

February 1972	—Group Captain J.A. Whitehead
February 1974	—Group Captain R.N. Law
30 July 1975	—Wing Commander J.I. Thomson
12 January 1976	—Group Captain D.G. Cameron
10 December 1979	—Group Captain R.G. Green
21 March 1983	—Group Captain M.E. McDonald
23 December 1985	—Group Captain R.V. Richardson
15 December 1987	—Group Captain K.J. Bricknell
January 1990	—Group Captain N.J. Ford
January 1994	—Group Captain J.W.C. Baker

AIRFIELD DEFENCE SQUADRONS

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1 October 1942 | —Security Guards Unit formed at Livingstone Field, NT |
| December 1944 | —‘Defence Pool’ raised at Noemfoor |
| 1 April 1945 | —Security Guards Unit re-named 1 Airfield Defence Squadron
—‘Defence Pool’ re-named 2 Airfield Defence Squadron |
| 19 November 1945 | —unit disbanded |
| 17 March 1983 | —2 Airfield Defence Squadron re-raised |
| June 1992 | —1 Airfield Defence Squadron re-raised as Ready Reserve Unit at Tindal, NT |
| November 1994 | —1ADS based at Tindal, NT
—2ADS based at Amberley, Qld |

NARRATIVE

The Airfield Defence Squadrons started life as the Security Guards Unit, formed at Livingstone Field, Northern Territory, on 1 October 1942. All guards at operational bases, advanced operational bases, radio stations and non-operational units were posted to the unit. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant C.A. MacKinnon.

The camp at Livingstone was erected and the assault course and rifle range completed, the parade ground cleaned and headquarters building occupied by 18 October 1942. The reason for forming the unit was to provide the operational air bases in Australia and in the South Pacific with trained and competent guards that could defend the bases against the very real threat of Japanese attack. The first training course was commenced on 22 October 1942, with 56 personnel, and four non-commissioned officer guards to act as instructors.

The parade state of the unit was six officers and 561 airmen, with this number increasing to 943 airmen by 26 July 1943.

The unit moved in 1943, but maintained the aim of training airmen as guards, with Number 9 course commencing on 14 June 1943. Life was difficult for the men of the unit, just as it was for all personnel living in Darwin during this period of the War. Darwin had only the slow

overland rail or troopships as the main methods of contact with the rest of the country and this, combined with the shortage of medical supplies and food, made it more of a tropical island than a port on the mainland. Combined with these hardships was the added danger of enemy aerial bombardment, as is recorded on 20 June 1943:

Received warning at 1050 Hostile aircraft approaching, 15 Hostile Bombers overhead. 9 Fighter Bombers strafed and bombed area at tree-top height at 1100hrs. All clear sounded at 1120. No bombs dropped in camp area. No Casualties.

In December 1944 at Noemfoor, north-west of Papua New Guinea, another unit was formed called the 'Defence Pool'. This unit was formed with the same aim of providing a guard force for a large number of RAAF installations. It is unclear what relationship the Defence Pool and the Security Guards Unit shared, although their roles were similar and their official histories merge at a later date. It is most likely that the Security Guards Unit provided the training and the new guards were put into the Defence Pool from where they were despatched to the RAAF installations in need of guards.

Early in 1945, a detachment of guards from the Defence Pool arrived at Morotai, a small island north of Australia, and a camp site for the main body was erected. The guarding of RAAF installations on Morotai was gradually taken over by the Pool and more Defence personnel called in. By the end of March the Defence Pool was functioning well, and the morale of the unit was reported to have increased significantly. Then, on 28 March, instructions were issued to abandon the Pool and return all guards to their wings and units. The unit camp site and all barracks equipment were to be handed over to 11 Communication Unit, which were to provide accommodation for a Liberator Squadron.

The decision to disband the Defence Pool was reconsidered until, by direction of the Chief of the Air Staff, a new unit to be called 2 Airfield Defence Squadron was formed. The unit was organised into six companies based along Army lines, but difficulties were experienced owing to the Squadron having no established camp. Before long the unit received its first operational order—'A' Flight, which was formed as an assault force, was to move on 'Oboe 1' operations. By May 1945, 2 Airfield Defence Squadron had already carried out operational functions, seen action and suffered casualties, and been commended for its operational activities.

Meanwhile the original Security Guards Unit had undergone a name change. The Squadron history for April 1945 indicates the change of name was made to 1 Airfield Defence Squadron. The unit still maintained the original aim of its predecessor, which was to centralise administration, standardise training, and provide a mobile body of guards which would be available in any emergency.

The end of the War brought about the downscaling of the Squadrons and then their eventual disbandment on 19 November 1945. The Squadrons had close to 1000 airmen guards, and saw action throughout the South Pacific during the second half of the War.

2 Airfield Defence Squadron was reformed on 17 March 1983 under the command of Squadron Leader J.B.H. Brown. The Squadron consisted of a headquarters, Support Flight and 1 Rifle Flight based at RAAF Richmond; 2 Rifle Flight based at RAAF Williamtown, New South Wales; 3 Rifle Flight based at RAAF Amberley, Queensland; and 4 Rifle Flight based at RAAF Fairbairn, Australian Capital Territory.

In March 1983, training in the following areas occurred: physical training, weapon training, map reading, communication, nuclear, biological and chemical warfare, gas chamber training and gunnery control. The Squadron went on exercises such as 'Pitch Black' in the Northern Territory, and other exercises around Australia.

During the Christmas and New Year period 1988-89 the Squadron headquarters moved from Richmond to Amberley to increase the standard of effectiveness and training. The Squadron is still maintained at Amberley and continues to conduct the usual training syllabus, and to participate in Defence exercises.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1 October 1942	—Flight Lieutenant C.A. MacKinnon
30 March 1943	—Flight Lieutenant N.A. McDonald
5 August 1943	—Flight Lieutenant V. Wendt
4 September 1944	—Flight Lieutenant W.G. Maunsell
17 March 1983	—Squadron Leader J.B.H. Brown
14 February 1984	—Squadron Leader S.D. Kerr
1 April 1988	—Squadron Leader D.M. Anderson
15 January 1990	—Squadron Leader G.R. Penney
1 November 1992	—Squadron Leader N.L. Vroomans

BRISBANE MEDICAL UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 15 July 1944 —formed in Brisbane, Qld
28 September 1945 —last entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

The Unit was formed in nucleus on 15 July 1944 at Austral House, Brisbane, and Squadron Leader C.A. Frew was posted as Commanding Officer on 16 August 1944.

On 1 November 1944, Station Sick Quarters, Archerfield, and Station Sick Quarters, Amberley, were allotted to Brisbane Medical Unit for air evacuation and the staging of patients.

The Malaria Control Training Unit was based at the Brisbane Medical Unit in January 1945.

The final entry in the Unit History Record was made on 28 September 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICER

- 16 August 1944 —Squadron Leader C.A. Frew

CENTRAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ESTABLISHMENT

Work With Light



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 9 November 1945 | —formed as Central Photographic Unit in Brisbane, Qld |
| May 1946 | —moved to Laverton, Vic. |
| 14 July 1947 | —unit disbanded |
| 14 June 1949 | —re-raised as Central Photographic Establishment at Laverton |
| November 1994 | —based at Laverton, Vic. |

NARRATIVE

The importance of good aerial imagery was established in World War I, when extensive use was made of the photographic medium. Australia, like its allies, sadly neglected photographic reconnaissance in the period between the wars. From 1940, the need for knowledge of enemy shipping, harbours and airfields proved how important a role photography played. The RAAF's photographic reconnaissance squadrons could not handle the vast requirement and the Service was reliant on United States forces to produce the majority of reconnaissance photography.

In September 1945, a conference was held in Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, to determine post-hostilities photography requirements. It was stressed that in peace, photography should not be forgotten, but should be kept alive in the organisation so that it could be augmented immediately a future war threatened. Following cessation of hostilities it was intended to establish a central photographic unit, the purpose of

which was to put air photography and mapping on a sound organisational and functional basis. The unit was to comprise air and ground negative and print libraries, production of prints and cine films, development of photographic techniques and equipment and an air photo plotting section. On 9 November 1945, the Central Photographic Unit was formed in Brisbane with a strength of 57 personnel, comprising 14 musterings including drivers, cooks, stewards and fitters. This unit was the forerunner of the present Central Photographic Establishment. In March 1946, the unit was alerted to prepare for a move to a Victorian location and by May had been re-located at RAAF Laverton. The unit functioned until 14 July 1947 when it was officially disbanded.

The present unit, Central Photographic Establishment (CPE), was formed on 14 June 1949 at RAAF Base Laverton, with an establishment of 34 personnel. Initially, CPE was housed in a number of buildings situated in different areas of RAAF Laverton and Albert Park Barracks. By November 1957 CPE moved entirely to Laverton. A specially constructed two-storey building had been completed and several wooden buildings were re-located which brought the unit together in one area. At a later date a security fence enclosed all the buildings. In 1987, a new headquarters building housing all administrative, supply and Air Imagery Flight personnel was opened, enabling the majority of wooden World War II buildings to be disposed of. Today CPE has over 60 personnel comprising seven musterings and is the largest specialist photography and imagery unit in the Australian Defence Force.

CPE has a number of important roles. The major one is the storage, retrieval and reproduction of all aerial imagery as well as historic ground imagery. To date, in excess of 40 000 aerial films and well over 250 000 ground negatives are stored in specially constructed vaults and controlled to specific temperature and humidity conditions. Upon receipt of aerial imagery, the film is checked for damage, numbered frame by frame, titled, registered and given a CPE number before being plotted. Plotting is an accurate permanent record using a map of suitable scale, depicting the exact coverage of the frames of the imagery. The Aerial Imagery area of CPE provides a vital link in the preparation and planning of military operations and exercises. CPE produces aerial imagery for all three Services, before, during and after most major manoeuvres.

Up until recent times, another important role of CPE was to provide specialist photographic support to all units of the RAAF, encompassing

all branches of photography: medical, police, public relations, recruiting, portraiture, copying, cinematography, micro and macrophotography, industrial and corrective to name a few. A ground photographic section, equipped similarly to most base photographic sections, undertook the general photographic requirements of all RAAF units in the Melbourne area. With the changing times, CPE still assists other units with personnel and specialist support, but this role is diminishing and photographic support for Melbourne ADF units continues at a reduced rate.

With the reduction of photographic support for Melbourne area units, there has been a corresponding increase in support in two specialist areas—electronic imaging (including video) and special projects. The special project area produces commercial and illustrative photography of a very high quality suitable for reproduction in magazines and journals. Australian Defence Force Recruiting use much of the products produced by special projects, as do an increasing number of customers throughout the Australian Defence Force.

Having its origins back in the days of motion pictures (cinematography), Air Force Video (AFV) has grown from its inception in the middle 1980s into a highly specialised and professional area, capable of producing videos of a technical quality equal to current television industry standards. Quality productions used for operational training, history recording and recruiting keep the members of AFV extremely busy.

In the past, CPE has been called on to assist following two national disasters. Films flown during the 1974 flooding of Brisbane and Ipswich were rushed to CPE for processing, printing and the production of large mosaics for government departments. When Cyclone 'Tracy' rampaged through Darwin, CPE went onto a continuous 48-hour shift to produce 300 40-inch square enlargements of the devastated area for use in clearing and rebuilding the city.

For many years, CPE has been on continual programs associated with Commonwealth Foreign Aid projects. In co-operation with the Royal Australian Army Survey Corps, CPE has produced hundreds of thousands of aerial survey frames suitable for the RAASC to produce maps. Aerial photography of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, flown by the RAAF and Army survey squadrons, was forwarded to CPE for printing and then sent to the Survey Corps who produce the maps for the nation concerned. Mapping projects with such colourful names as 'Skai

Piksa', 'Gading' and 'Cenderawasih' have each taken a number of years to complete.

With the myriad of changes affecting the Services at present, 'civilianisation', contracting out of some services, and personnel trade structure re-organisation are just some of the influences impacting on the unit's future. Whatever the outcome of these changes, they will alter CPE's operations and long-term future.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

June 1949	—Squadron Leader C.J. Robertson
October 1949	—Squadron Leader G.A. Everingham
July 1954	—Squadron Leader K.L. Porteous
July 1956	—Squadron Leader G.M. Grainger
April 1959	—Squadron Leader L.C. Lobb
February 1963	—Squadron Leader L.G. Connelly
April 1966	—Squadron Leader R.H. Lamont
February 1972	—Squadron Leader W.T. Riggs
October 1973	—Squadron Leader W.F. Murphy
January 1975	—Wing Commander R.H. Lamont
July 1976	—Squadron Leader W.L. Fish
January 1977	—Wing Commander E.J. Kluukeri
November 1981	—Wing Commander D.J. Godfrey
January 1984	—Wing Commander D.C. Stevens
July 1986	—Wing Commander R.A. Kelley
January 1992	—Squadron Leader N.M. Cooper
February 1993	—Wing Commander G.C. Walton

ELECTRONIC WARFARE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| May 1986 | —Directorate of Electronic Warfare—Air Force formed at Salisbury, SA |
| 1 July 1990 | —Electronic Warfare Operational Support Unit established |
| 1 February 1993 | —amalgamated with Aircraft Research and Development Unit |

NARRATIVE

The Directorate of Electronic Warfare—Air Force formed at Defence Research Centre, Salisbury, during May 1986. Squadron Leader P.W. Arthur officially established the directorate during May 1986, when the original Strike Operations and Research and Development Sections were joined by the Integrated Software Support Flight from Amberley, which was absorbed in the former section. In June 1987 the Maritime Analysis Section was included in the organisation and, at the end of December, the whole organisation moved into interim accommodation.

This move was completed on 27 January 1988, but it was not until 1 August 1989 that land clearing commenced prior to the construction of new facilities for the Unit. The facility was opened on 16 September 1991 by The Honourable Robert Ray, Minister for Defence, in the presence of Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal R.G. Funnell.

All the sections were involved in training and education visits overseas. For example, from 24 to 30 April 1988, the Maritime Analysis Section was attached to 92 Wing flying out of Townsville and United States Navy Base, Agana, Guam. Participation in exercises at Darwin between 28 May and 4 June 1988 followed, and Squadron Leader J.C. McBride acted as a member of the 'Kamiran' Air Headquarters at Darwin during Exercise 'Kangaroo 89' from 1 to 24 August 1989.

Overseas visits were also made to keep in touch with technology in the electronic warfare field and the Unit continues to be involved with the training of electronic warfare systems experts and other training in sophisticated associated systems.

On 1 July 1990, the Electronic Warfare Operational Support Unit was established. Its role was to provide electronic warfare operational support for the conduct of air operations in peace and war; provide information for statement of requirements and procurement of electronic warfare equipment; and research and development. To fulfil these roles, the Unit was tasked with electronic warfare operational systems support, intelligence, training, and research and development support. On 1 January 1991, the Database Development Section joined the Unit for a period of 12 months.

The Unit was amalgamated into Aircraft Research and Development Unit on 1 February 1993.

COMMANDING OFFICER

1 May 1987

—Wing Commander G.K. McCleery

EMBARKATION DEPOTS

NARRATIVE

Six Embarkation Depots, later to be known as Personnel Depots, were established by the RAAF during World War II. The principal function of these Depots was to house personnel awaiting embarkation for overseas posts and to ensure that, before departure, they were medically and dentally fit, vaccinated, inoculated and properly equipped. RAF, Royal New Zealand Air Force and Netherlands East Indies Air Force personnel, wives of personnel and Empire Air Training Scheme personnel were also processed through these units.

In addition personnel disembarking from the Far East passed through the Depots. After being medically examined, X-rayed, equipped and checked and having records taken, personnel were interviewed by Air Board staff and sent on disembarkation leave. Personnel who were staying at the Depots for a period of time were often detailed to work on the wharves, or to RAAF bases to assist with aerodrome defence works.

Ongoing courses were run at the Depots, and covered subjects such as weapons training, unarmed defence, ship and aircraft recognition and aerodrome defence. Organised sport and PT were also arranged for personnel—often more than a thousand at a time in transit at any one of the Depots.

No. 1 Embarkation Depot

This Depot was formed at the Melbourne Showgrounds, Ascot Vale, Victoria, on 1 November 1940, moving to the Melbourne Cricket Ground at Ransford on 3 November 1943. The name of the unit changed to No. 1 Personnel Depot in May 1944. As part of the training program, practice air raids were carried out, including removal of personnel, checking of blackout arrangements and fire fighting.

In August 1944, a representative of the *Sun* newspaper visited the Depot in connection with press reports relating to the unsuitability of accommodation for personnel at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The Depot was disbanded at Laverton, Victoria, at the end of October 1946.

No. 2 Embarkation Depot

This Depot was formed at Bradfield Park, Lindfield, New South Wales, on 1 August 1940. The name of the unit changed to No. 2 Personnel Depot in May 1944. Tropical service and hardening courses were run

at the Depot, and prisoners of war began arriving from Singapore in October 1945. The RAAF Discharge Squadron of No. 2 Personnel Depot eventually moved to the Royal Agriculture Showgrounds, Moore Park, as a section of the Combined Services Dispersal Centre, to effect final discharge action. The unit ceased to function at the end of October 1946.

No. 3 Embarkation Depot

This Depot was formed as part of RAAF Station Sandgate, Brisbane, on 16 December 1940, but was located temporarily at Amberley Air Force Base, moving to Sandgate on 10 April 1941. Classes in navigation, armament and signalling were conducted, with revision courses in navigation and morse, and lectures on administration, Air Force law and first aid also held. PT, drill and organised sport were included in the daily activities of the Depot.

Personnel were attached to the Depot to be tropically kitted out, amongst other things, and while there were trained in aerodrome defence, including bayonet fighting and weapon training. By June 1943, all personnel were lectured on security of information and discipline. In April 1944 the name of the unit changed to No. 3 Personnel Depot and in July a transit camp was set up in the old Rocklea Showground.

No. 3 Personnel Depot became the parent unit at Sandgate on 6 November 1944 and training continued, with a live grenade throwing range being set up. Training films and documentary security films were screened, and WAAAF recruit training carried out.

Instructions to commence disbandment were received at the end of August 1946. The Depot ceased to function on 9 September, finally disbanding on 29 January 1947.

No. 4 Embarkation Depot

This Depot was formed on 25 November 1940, and was officially established on 2 December at 40 Pennington Terrace, North Adelaide, taking over St Mark's College.

On 24 May 1941, the entire Depot establishment took part in a march for Empire Day. This was the largest contingent of airmen ever to take part in a march in South Australia, when 1000 servicemen participated.

Anti-gas instruction was given to personnel awaiting embarkation, as well as lectures on secrecy and service etiquette. On 8 October 1942, the Depot moved to Scotch College at Mitchum, then to Springbank on 11 January 1944. The name of the Depot was changed to No. 4 Personnel Depot in April 1944.

A guard of honour comprising one warrant officer and 30 men attended the opening of the South Australian parliament on 19 July 1945.

Having discharged 19 613 personnel from its formation to the end of September 1946, the Depot proceeded towards disbandment.

No. 5 Embarkation Depot

This Depot was formed at 5 School of Technical Training, Perth, on 10 April 1941. The Depot moved to Fremantle Boys' School and Princess May Girls' School in Fremantle on 14 July 1942, followed by a move to Salvado Road, Subiaco, on 2 December. The Depot name changed in April 1944 to No. 5 Personnel Depot.

At the end of September 1946, sections of the Depot were established at Pearce, ANA House and Karrakatta, to carry out discharge and recruiting duties. No. 5 Personnel Depot ceased to function as a unit on 25 September 1946, and commenced disbandment.

No. 6 Embarkation Depot

The Unit History Record of No. 6 Embarkation Depot at Hobart begins in August 1945, with Flight Lieutenant G. Easton as Commanding Officer. The name of the unit changed on 1 September 1945 to No. 6 Personnel Depot.

The Depot moved to Brighton on 17 November 1945, commencing messing, equipment, accounting and barracks functions, and all sections connected with discharge and rehabilitation tasks. Another move to the rifle range at Sandy Bay was undertaken on 1 July 1946. No. 6 Personnel Depot disbanded on 15 October 1946.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

No. 1 Embarkation Depot

1 November 1940 —Flight Lieutenant R.K. Bazley

No. 2 Embarkation Depot

1 August 1940 —Flight Lieutenant A.S. Gray

28 October 1940 —Flight Lieutenant J.M. Sandonnini

3 June 1941 —Squadron Leader A.S. Davey

22 December 1941 —Flight Lieutenant J.R. Campbell

6 March 1942 —Flight Lieutenant A.A. Doyle

12 May 1944 —Squadron Leader D.R. Williams

30 December 1944 —Wing Commander F.A. Sewell

23 June 1945 —Wing Commander A.R. Brown
3 June 1946 —Wing Commander W.G. Leer

No. 3 Embarkation Depot

16 December 1940 —Flying Officer E.H. Skerington
5 July 1944 —Squadron Leader W.S. Walne
4 July 1946 —Squadron Leader A. Taylor

No. 4 Embarkation Depot

29 November 1940 —Flight Lieutenant H.F. Taylor
17 March 1941 —Flight Lieutenant H.C. Durant
15 May 1942 —Squadron Leader C.deC. Matulich
15 October 1942 —Squadron Leader E.S. Pitman
24 April 1945 —Wing Commander H.S. Preston

No. 5 Embarkation Depot

10 April 1941 —Squadron Leader H.F. Clayton-Daubeny
24 October 1941 —Flight Lieutenant G.M. Pennefather
2 February 1944 —Squadron Leader R.W. Graham

No. 6 Embarkation Depot

10 August 1945 —Flight Lieutenant G. Easton
26 September 1945 —Squadron Leader A.A. Doyle

FLYING PERSONNEL RESEARCH UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 30 September 1943 —raised at Melbourne University
31 November 1945 —last entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

The Flying Personnel Research Unit, previously known as 1 Clinical Investigation Section of 1 Training Group, was established at Melbourne University on 30 September 1943. The Unit was under the functional control of the Director General of Medical Services and its charter was research into aviation physiology and medicine. Flight Lieutenant S.L. Prescott had assumed command of the Unit, which was a lodger unit at the School of Administration, on 22 September 1943. Courses run by the Unit included experimental research, instruction in chemical warfare, pathology of flight and psychiatry. Tests were undertaken in the oxygen laboratory and low pressure chamber.

Medical studies undertaken by staff of the Flying Personnel Research Unit included those on the effect of anti-malarial drugs on altitude tolerance and the toxicity of industrial solvents. Special research was undertaken at Brisbane and Perth universities. In a practical sense, the Unit contributed to other activities. For example, Flight Lieutenant R. Christie was on duty with the Commonwealth Serum Laboratory for a three-month period commencing 19 November 1944 to assist with the production of a cholera vaccine, and Squadron Leader F.W. Kiel was seconded to North-Eastern Area on 10 September 1945 to undertake the medical air evacuation of casualties.

On 14 November 1944, the Unit, consisting of eight officers, 15 airmen and six airwomen, was notified that it would be based with 1 School of Technical Training. This organisational linking continued until 1 School of Technical Training was disbanded in November 1945, at which date the Flying Personnel Research Unit's administration was handled by 1 Personnel Depot. The final entry in the Flying Personnel Research Unit History Record is dated 31 November 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICER

GUIDED WEAPONS INSTRUCTION UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 21 April 1958 | —formed at RAAF Edinburgh, SA |
| 21 October 1959 | —transferred temporarily to buildings in
Weapons Research Establishment,
Salisbury |
| 14 July 1961 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

The Guided Weapons Instruction Unit was formed on 21 April 1958 as a separate unit, under the command of the Officer Commanding, RAAF Edinburgh. It had six personnel on establishment and its function was the instruction of selected officers on the principles and applications of guided weapons in accordance with the syllabus and instructions issued by the Department of Air. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant Campbell-Burns.

The Unit presented an exhibition of guided missiles at the Royal Adelaide Show in September 1958. Discussions were held in January 1959 on the inclusion of some guided weapons in the RAAF display at an international trade fair held later that year. Also, staff from the Directorate of Training visited for discussions on the manufacture of training aids, various aspects of the proposed syllabus, and types of courses that were required for the future. A representative of de Havilland Aircraft spoke on the use of the 'Firestreak' air-to-air guided weapon training aid. A variation in policy of the Guided Weapons Briefing Course was made such that the course was made available to officers of all branches of the Service. A 'Seaslug' surface-to-air guided weapon was also given as a showpiece in front of the Headquarters Building, RAAF College, Point Cook. With the opening of the swimming pool at RAAF Edinburgh, the Unit quickly became involved in the inter-unit swimming competitions.

In October 1959, with the letting of the contract by the Department of Works for conversion of the Unit's building, personnel were moved to a building in the Missiles Projects Area, Weapons Research Establishment,

Salisbury. A temporary workshop was set up in a room made available to the Unit by Maintenance Squadron, RAAF Edinburgh. In January 1960 there was a conference held pertaining to the syllabus for training of officers, senior non-commissioned officers and airmen on the 'Bloodhound' Weapon System. A Bloodhound familiarisation course was commenced in March 1960, with course members visiting Woomera for practical training. Also in March, renovations were completed and six Unit buildings were accepted back from the Department of Works and made suitable for training of personnel in guided weapons.

Altogether 17 Bloodhound weapon system courses were held at the Unit. On 4 July 1961 an Administration Instruction was received from Headquarters Support Command directing disbandment and on 14 July 1961 the Unit was officially disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

21 April 1958	—Flight Lieutenant T.G. Campbell-Burns
10 January 1961	—Squadron Leader R.B. Aronsen

MEDICAL OPERATIONAL SUPPORT UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- 3 February 1969 —formed at Richmond, NSW
25 August 1973 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

The Medical Operational Support Unit (MOSU) was officially formed at Richmond on 3 February 1969, and officially opened by Air Vice Marshal K.S. Hennock on 17 February. The opening coincided with the commencement of the first junior nursing officers course in preventative medicine and practical aeromedical evacuation. This course was run on a regular basis, and later also included medical orderlies. Other courses progressively conducted at MOSU included field hygiene courses, senior non-medical officers course in Air Force health, naval pest control courses, hygiene inspectors course and hygiene inspectors course in meat and other foods.

At the RAAF Richmond open day, held on 4 April 1971 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the RAAF, MOSU provided three displays: bivouac tents with photos and equipment depicting aeromedical evacuation since its inception into the RAAF; the air transportable dental facility, with photos depicting field dentistry 1939–1945, modern RAAF dental flights and dental treatment within the RAAF; and a water treatment plant set up by MOSU Hygiene Flight.

Members of MOSU Public Health Section conducted lectures in field hygiene, bush camp layout and tropical diseases for a short pre-selection course for Warrant Officer (Disciplinary) training applicants on 11 August 1971. In June 1972, lectures in artificial respiration and closed chest massage were given to 37 Squadron radio and electrical trades. Lectures and demonstrations given during August 1972 included: first aid and resuscitation to 37 and 38 Squadrons and AMTDU; lectures and static demonstration to RNZAF aviation medicine and air evacuation course; lectures in aviation medicine, first aid, resuscitation and hygiene to NSW University Squadron; lectures in aviation medicine and decompression chamber run for CSIRO and No. 21 Loadmaster Course. Hygiene and first

aid lectures were given to ATTU and Fire Section in March 1973, and to the RAAFWA on base in July 1973.

Another open day was held at RAAF Richmond on 8 April 1973, and MOSU mounted a static display of aeromedical equipment in a Hercules aircraft. Accent was placed in this display on the RAAF's role in civilian assistance in urgent medical cases.

Medical Operational Support Unit was disbanded on 25 August 1973.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

3 February 1969	—Squadron Leader R.W. Rowley
8 December 1969	—Wing Commander B.J. Mahoney
10 January 1973	—Squadron Leader D.E. Charlton

RAAF AIR POWER STUDIES CENTRE

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 7 August 1989 | —formed at RAAF Base Fairbairn, ACT |
| 25–27 March 1991 | —inaugural RAAF Air Power Conference, Canberra |
| 14 October 1992 | —inaugural RAAF History Conference, Canberra |
| November 1994 | —based at Fairbairn, ACT |

NARRATIVE

The Air Power Studies Centre was formed at RAAF Base Fairbairn, Australian Capital Territory, on 7 August 1989 as a result of a Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) directive. It was to be a centre of expertise for the analysis of air power within the RAAF and for the provision of advice to the CAS and the RAAF generally on air power issues, doctrine and policy. To meet this role, the tasks of the Centre include:

- the study of developments in air power world-wide;
- the development and maintenance of RAAF air power doctrine;
- the conduct and co-ordination of research into air power doctrine;
- contribution to air power education within the RAAF and in other organisations as opportunities arise; and
- the sponsorship of CAS Air Power Fellowships.

Group Captain B.D. O'Loughlin was appointed the first Director, with Wing Commanders B.L. Kavanagh, D.J. Schubert and G.W. Waters forming the inaugural staff. Wing Commander A.W. Stephens (RAAF Reserve) was also located at APSC, on a special project for CAS—researching and writing a monograph on *Ideas, Strategy and Doctrine in the RAAF, 1921–1991*, the Governor-General launching the subsequent book, *Power Plus Attitude*, on 17 June 1992.

Early in 1990, Group Captain D.J. Schubert assumed the position of Director and Squadron Leader P.J. McCarry commenced the first CAS Air Power Fellowship on 'Wargaming in the RAAF'. So successful was this that it eventually led to the incorporation of a new role for the Centre, that of developing wargaming expertise.

Group Captain B.J. Espeland took over as director in late 1990 and the focus of attention at APSC turned to the development and publication of the AAP 1000—RAAF Air Power Manual, which was subsequently launched by the CAS, Air Marshal R.G. Funnell, on 10 September 1990. In the months following the launch, the staff visited most RAAF bases and establishments to present air power awareness lectures aimed at broadly educating members of the RAAF. Presentations on air power doctrine were subsequently given to Army and RAN Command and Staff Colleges, to the ADF Warfare Centre, to students of JSSC and other RAAF courses and to final year ADFA (RAAF) cadets. Subsequently, air power education was adopted for all courses sponsored by RAAF Training Command. Additionally, academic links were also established with several institutions including ANU, Deakin, Bond University and the University of Queensland.

In the few years since its creation, the Centre has hosted numerous Defence fellows and Reserve officers who, together with a permanent staff of five, have undertaken a variety of studies and tasks for the CAS. Notable among these are:

- Dr C. Coulthard-Clark—*The RAAF in Vietnam* (the official history of the RAAF's participation in the war in Vietnam);
- Wing Commander A.W. Stephens and Air Commodore B.D. O'Loughlin—*The Decisive Factor: Air Power Doctrine by Air Vice Marshal H.N. Wrigley*;
- Wing Commander G.W. Waters—*Gulf Lesson One*;
- Squadron Leader J. Bennett—*Highest Traditions: The History of No. 2 Squadron, RAAF*; and
- Wing Commander E.E. Casasgrande—*Operations Law for Commanders*.

The APSC has also facilitated several major air power conferences. The first, 'Conventional Air Power into the 21st Century, Smaller But Larger' was held in Canberra 25–27 March 1991. The second, 'The Qualitative Edge: The Role of Air Power in Regional Cooperation', was held in Melbourne on 22 October 1992 in conjunction with the Australian International Air Show and Aerospace Expo at Avalon. Both received critical acclaim. Additionally, the Centre also hosts the annual RAAF History Conference. Three conferences have been held to date, topics including: 'The Air Chiefs', 'The RAAF in the South-West Pacific 1942–45' and 'The RAAF in Europe and North Africa'.

Staff from the Centre now regularly conduct visits and lecture tours to Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and New Zealand. Ties are also maintained with doctrine staff in the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Group Captain G.W. Waters is presently the Director of the Centre which continues to gain a local and international reputation for the quality of the publications, studies and analysis of contemporary issues raised each year.

DIRECTORS

7 August 1989	—Group Captain B.D. O'Loughlin
26 February 1990	—Group Captain D.J. Schubert
7 August 1990	—Group Captain B.J. Espeland
13 August 1991	—Group Captain J.S. Hamwood
12 December 1992	—Group Captain G.W. Waters

RAAF CENTRAL BAND

CHRONOLOGY

2 June 1952	—raised at Laverton, Vic.
November 1994	—based at Laverton

NARRATIVE

For nearly 75 years, marching bands have had their place in the Royal Australian Air Force. The early bases—Point Cook, Laverton and Richmond—formed bands and later some small units had drum bands. The established bands often played in city marches and ceremonial parades, particularly after World War II. The amateur musicians in these bands were drawn from trade and unskilled musterings and time spent rehearsing and parading was at the expense of the hours allotted for their normal duties. This frequently caused disruption to the working sections, particularly as more demands were being placed on the services of these bands. As a royal visit was planned for 1954 the Air Board looked to the formation of a military band comprised of professional musicians.

The RAAF Central Band was formed in 1952. It was to be similar to the regimental bands of the British armed forces, capable of playing a wider range of music than the existing RAAF bands. An experienced musical conductor was recruited as Commanding Officer and Music Master. His charter was to recruit suitable professional musicians from the United Kingdom, Australia and elsewhere to form a first class military band of about 40 members and to play military music, dance music, choral music and a range of other music. A Corps of Drums was included in the make-up of the band. To ensure the musicians met the standard required, revision courses in the history, appreciation and theory of music were included in the early rehearsals programs.

The first important public engagement was for the Coronation Pageant performed on four nights in Melbourne in June 1953. It received such enthusiastic acclaim that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation immediately gave it two national re-broadcasts. This pleased the Air Board and confirmed the confidence of the senior officers who had supported the Band's introduction. One month later, under vice-regal patronage, the Band's full-scale dance orchestra played at a formal function in Melbourne and proved to be a first class 'swing ensemble'.

Based at Laverton, the Band rehearsed in the gymnasium building. The rehearsal hall was icy cold in winter, extremely hot in summer and was not sound proof. Frequent interruptions during rehearsals were caused by the noise of aircraft jet engines running on, aircraft taking off and landing, and the noise created by railway trains and road traffic travelling between Melbourne and Geelong. Concentration suffered and the temperament of the conductor and musicians was often brittle. Uniforms required for special occasions were not forthcoming and repairs and improvements to the rehearsal room were often delayed. The musicians began to show dissatisfaction with their pay and other conditions. Their musical proficiency had been proven and they were being offered positions with better pay and stability by civilian agents. However, the Band was kept together and a better rehearsal room was found at Albert Park Barracks. This was destroyed by fire in 1958 and a new rehearsal room was built and occupied in 1960.

The musical strength of the Band, as an independent unit of the Air Force, grew from about 40 in 1953 to over 60 in five years, including its own administrative staff. Boy musicians were enlisted from March 1955 and by the end of the year 15 boy musicians were on strength. In 1985 the first female musicians were enlisted and posted to the Band.

The Band's repertoire was very extensive, to the credit of the Music Master and the musicians. As a service band its main function was parades and ceremonials, the highest priorities being visits of royalty, vice-regal and national ceremonies, presentations and Trooping of the Queen's Colours, and parades of a formal service nature. A little over 12 months after its formation the Band accompanied the tour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh to each State. Subsequent tours by the Queen, the Queen Mother, the Duke and Duchess of York and other members of the Royal Family, the President of the United States of America, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the King and Queen of Thailand and numerous other visiting dignitaries were high on the list of Band engagements. Between formal engagements, the Band travelled frequently to all capital and provincial cities and regions performing at festivals, race meetings and a host of other public events including the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982 and the World Scout Jamboree.

New avenues in presenting the Band to the public included productions of a concert version of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, with a

choir of 200 mixed voices; orchestral accompaniment for solo pianists performing Tchaikovsky's *Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra*; Greig's *Concerto for Pianoforte and Band*; Gilbert and Sullivan productions; studio recordings for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the British Broadcasting Corporation, His Masters Voice and others; and many performances accompanying vocalists at State art centres, the Sydney Opera House and at Carols by Candlelight at various centres.

When possible the Band travelled to other countries: New Zealand for the 25th Anniversary of the Royal New Zealand Air Force; Montreal, Canada, for EXPO '67; Nauru and Port Moresby; Malaysia, where at one performance on Penang Island no less than 40 000 people were entertained; Vietnam, where it performed at Vung Tau, Nui Dat and Phan Rang.

Perhaps the highest credits achieved were when experts issued invitations to perform in the World Music Contest in Holland in 1961 and the West Berlin Festival; also when the Musical Director was appointed Supreme Director of Music for the British/Australian Military Tattoo in Sydney in 1964 with bands of Her Majesty's Grenadier Guards, the Royal Marines, the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders and, of course, the RAAF Central Band. The music was arranged by the Director for 300 musicians and 19 performances. The following year the Band played in the 1965 Royal Tournament in London and at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. In 1987 the Band performed with the Australian Defence Force Contingent at the Royal Tournament at Earl's Court, London, and in other British cities.

From the inception of the RAAF Central Band in 1952, it has performed with distinction on behalf of the Royal Australian Air Force and the nation it represents.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

2 June 1952	—Squadron Leader L.H. Hicks
27 December 1968	—Flight Lieutenant R.A.Y. Mitchell
March 1984	—Squadron Leader M.A. Butcher
June 1989	—Squadron Leader G. Lloyd

RAAF CENTRE BRISBANE

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 26 January 1972 | —formed at premises in Kangaroo Point, Brisbane |
| 8 February 1972 | —medical section opened |
| 22 June 1977 | —Centre disbanded |
| 7 July 1977 | —became RAAF Support Unit Brisbane |

NARRATIVE

On 26 January 1972 RAAF Centre Brisbane was formed at premises in Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. It was formed because of the re-organisation of RAAF units in the Brisbane area. The first Commanding Officer was Wing Commander L.B. Brown. Unit establishment was not known on formation but by February 1972 unit strength was 14 personnel.

RAAF Centre Brisbane was a self-accounting unit. Queensland Squadron Air Training Corps was divested of its responsibility for providing financial, equipment and personnel administration once the Centre began operations.

On 8 February 1972 a medical section was also established. Steering groups were set up as part of feasibility studies into the future of all capital city centres. During December 1975 and January 1976 activities at the Centre were kept at a minimum due to the uncertainty of the future of the Queensland Air Training Corps and the Centre. In March 1976 a fact-finding team visited the Centre to investigate and report to the steering group on the continuation of the accountancy branch. This led to a decision to close, re-organise and re-name the whole Centre. The unit was officially disbanded on 6 February 1977 and became RAAF Support Unit Brisbane on 7 February 1977. Finalisation of disbandment of the former was not completed till 7 July 1977.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 26 January 1972 | —Wing Commander L.B. Brown |
| 27 January 1975 | —Wing Commander G.H. Bibby |
| 4 January 1977 | —Squadron Leader Erhardt |

RAAF CHEMICAL RESEARCH UNIT

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 November 1944 | —formed at Bowen, Qld |
| 24 December 1945 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

RAAF Chemical Research Unit was formed on 1 November 1944 at Bowen in North Queensland. Its function was to trial various chemical and gas aerial spraying techniques, collate the results and report them to higher authorities. The first Commanding Officer was Flight Lieutenant C.H. Parkinson, with an establishment of 111 personnel. The Unit operated two Vengeance and four Beaufort aircraft.

On 1 December 1944, the Unit took over control of the Bowen Aerodrome and installations after the departure of 9 Squadron, which had been co-located with it. This led to an increase in its workload at a time when personnel also started trialing gas suits. After each flight, decontamination procedures were strongly enforced for both aircrew and aircraft.

With the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific and the threat of invasion gone, the Unit was disbanded on 24 December 1945.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 November 1944 | —Flight Lieutenant C.H. Parkinson |
| 28 February 1945 | —Flight Lieutenant N.J. Lennon |

RAAF COMPONENT AUSTRALIAN CORONATION CONTINGENT

CHRONOLOGY

20 February 1953	—formed at RAAF Laverton, Vic.
5 May 1953	—arrived Portsmouth, England
16 June 1953	—departed Portsmouth
15 August 1953	—arrived Sydney
17 August 1953	—Contingent disbanded

NARRATIVE

Air Force Headquarters issued Instruction 9/53 directing that a RAAF component, Australian Coronation Contingent, be formed at RAAF Laverton, Victoria, on 20 February 1953. The component was made up of 60 officers and other ranks including three WRAAF and one Nursing Service member. The function of this component was to represent the RAAF at the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Selections were made from unit recommendations and subject to confirmation by medical and personnel examinations. The component also included seven members of the Active Reserve and Citizen Air Force. Reporters from leading Melbourne newspapers visited the Contingent during the weeks leading up to its departure, interviewing members and taking photographs. The Officer Commanding was Group Captain K.R. Parsons.

On 10 March 1953 the component commenced training in drill and arms and on 18 March an advance party of one officer and four other ranks departed for Sydney for embarkation on HMAS *Sydney* to make arrangements for the main party's embarkation at Melbourne on 24 March 1953. HMAS *Sydney* arrived at Melbourne to load heavy baggage and equipment. Embarkation orders were raised and members briefed. Farewells in the form of parties were heard from all messes. On 24 March 1953 the main party embarked and departed Melbourne at 1130 hours.

Training duties were commenced on board unless rough weather did not permit. All airmen were also allocated to various sections of the ship to work with their opposite musterings in the ship's company. On

25 March 1953 an announcement was made over the public address system that Queen Mary had passed away. The ship arrived at Fremantle on 29 March 1953. The personnel were allowed some shore leave in Perth and official guests were entertained by the captain of the *Sydney*. The journey continued into the Indian Ocean where the excessive heat caused drill and training to be cancelled. After arriving at Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), leave was granted to the component. Various high commissions were entertained on board the ship during the brief stopover.

On leaving Colombo, the ship passed through the Suez Canal and anchored in Tobruk Harbour where all personnel attended a ceremony on 23 April at the Tobruk War Cemetery. Proceeding onto Malta the ship's company was inspected by Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten on Anzac Day. Once again the component was allowed some leave whilst HMAS *Sydney* engaged in some local war games. After leaving Malta the ship arrived at Gibraltar for a brief stay.

On 5 May 1953 the ship arrived at Portsmouth, England, and was greeted by the High Commissioner for Australia, Sir Thomas White, and a large contingent of press photographers and news reporters. After unloading their equipment component personnel travelled to Portsmouth Railway Station where they entrained for Brookwood—Pirbright Camp where all Commonwealth troops were stationed. On arrival personnel were directed to their quarters and messes and provided with a hot meal. The rest of the evening was spent unpacking and settling in.

On 6 May 1953 all personnel assembled on the parade ground and drill and training commenced. They were then granted a week's leave. On 11 May 1953 the Australian Contingent was inspected by its leader Lieutenant General Sir Edmund Herring who also addressed personnel on their duties for the actual coronation. From that time numerous tours and functions were put on for the Contingent. On 26 May 1953 the Duke of Edinburgh visited Pirbright to inspect all contingents.

Finally on 1 June the RAAF component, as part of the Australian Contingent along with the other Commonwealth countries, South Africa, New Zealand and Canada, proceeded to Westminster Abbey where the crowning ceremony was to be performed. Rain fell intermittently but it did not stop a crowd of 100 000 from lining the route. Component personnel returned to camp that night after a job well done. On 3 June 1953 they went to Buckingham Palace and paraded on the lawns. Her

Majesty the Queen inspected the troops and all commanding officers were invested with the Coronation Medal.

After being paid on 4 June 1953 the component was granted a week's leave and this was spent mostly exploring England. A farewell party was held on 13 June 1953 and Group Captain Parsons thanked the Commanding Officer of Pirbright Camp for making the RAAF component's stay an enjoyable one. The component then broke camp and on 14 June departed for Portsmouth. On arrival at Portsmouth, personnel received promotions throughout the ranks. They then boarded HMAS *Sydney* for the return journey to Australia. A review of the Fleet by the Queen and a fireworks display was held on 15 June before they sailed. On 16 June the ship departed. Next stop was Halifax, Canada, where there was a march through the streets and various functions for the RAAF and Navy, then on to the United States of America to visit Baltimore. During the stay, there were some tours organised of Washington DC. On leaving the USA, the ship passed through the Panama Canal and proceeded to Hawaii and Pearl Harbor. More functions and talks were held during the stay. In Auckland, New Zealand, on 10 August 1953, a ball and a street march were organised. On 11 August the ship sailed for Sydney. En route, Group Captain Parsons thanked the captain and crew of HMAS *Sydney* for the assistance given.

On 15 August 1953 the component disembarked in Sydney. Disbandment was finalised by 17 August 1953.

COMMANDING OFFICER.

20 February 1953 —Group Captain K.R. Parsons

RAAF COMPONENT LONG RANGE WEAPONS ESTABLISHMENT

CHRONOLOGY

- 9 February 1948 —formed at Woomera, SA
February 1956 —final entry in Unit History Record

NARRATIVE

Although the RAAF Component Long Range Weapons Establishment was raised as a separate Air Force unit on 9 February 1948, it was part of the Integrated Joint Service Establishment which formed the Long Range Weapons Experimental Establishment. This establishment was under the control of the Superintendent, Brigadier Edgar, and tasked with the preparation of range, testing and domestic facilities at Woomera.

A camp was established at Camp Phillip in June 1948 and work progressed with the Bomb Ballistic Range. On 9 September, the Long Range Weapons Experimental Establishment moved into Woomera Village where, on 1 November 1948, its name was varied to Long Range Warfare Establishment Range.

The unit's main concern was the establishment of range facilities and the development of the Woomera Village. The development of village amenities, married quarters and messes was supervised by a village board, with the Commanding Officer of the RAAF Component as a member.

On 17 July 1950, Aircraft Research and Development Unit Detachment 'A' commenced functioning at Woomera, and bomb ballistic trials were conducted from Woomera by the detachment and the RAAF Component. By December 1950, members of the RAAF Component had become closely involved with many of the trials which were being undertaken on the range.

A mark of the increased activity at the range was the arrival of an RAF Washington (B-29) bomber on 24 September 1952, and the regular arrival of Hastings transport aircraft of RAF Transport Command from the United Kingdom. There was also a steady stream of visitors—royalty, senior politicians and servicemen, marking the importance of the

programs being undertaken on the range by British and Australian forces.

When the unit was raised in 1948 it comprised two members. In May 1955 the strength had expanded to nine officers and 79 airmen and when the Unit History Record ceased in January–February 1956, the strength of the unit had dropped to 60.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1 May 1948	—Flight Lieutenant L.B. Smooker
10 September 1951	—Squadron Leader L.B. Anderson
19 April 1954	—Squadron Leader D.J. Campbell
9 June 1954	—Squadron Leader R.B. Anderson

RAAF INSTITUTE OF AVIATION MEDICINE

CHRONOLOGY

- 8 February 1956 —School of Aviation Medicine opened
at Point Cook, Vic.
- 1 July 1960 —re-named RAAF Institute of Aviation
Medicine
- November 1994 —based at Point Cook

NARRATIVE

In 1940, to keep pace with the rapid technical developments that were taking place with respect to military aircraft, and to support the training of flying personnel through the Empire Air Training Scheme, the Minister for Air established the Flying Personnel Research Committee (FPRC). This was composed of military and civilian scientists and tasked to co-ordinate aviation medicine research and facilities.

In 1943, 1 and 2 Flying Personnel Research Units were established at the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney. Each unit, also known as Clinical Investigation Section (CIS), comprised several sections working in their specific areas of interest. A RAAF medical officer administered each unit, responsible to the Director General Medical Services.

Scientists worked under the direction of the FPRC investigating aspects of aeromedical problems including the use of oxygen equipment needed to combat hypoxia at high altitude; flying clothing; effects of acceleration; vision; noise; and motion sickness. Researchers worked at improving aircrew efficiency through considerations of comfort and safety, by improving aircraft seating, cockpit layout and size and design of instrument panels. These scientists also provided aviation engineers with specific data on human anatomy, physiology and psychology.

One of the most significant inventions was the Cotton Aerodynamic Anti-G Suit to combat the problem of blackout by pilots flying high performance aircraft. Work commenced late in 1940, using a specially constructed centrifuge. By 1942 the suit had been given its first series of test runs and by 1943 pilots were carrying out familiarisation using the

suits in preparation for aerial combat. Despite the positive results, the suit was never used on active service.

The FPRC was also responsible for the development of psychological preselection tests for determining the suitability of pilots for operational military duty.

During the War, the FPRC produced some 140 reports, with research leading to improved selection and training methods for aircrew, improvements in safety and performance of aircrew, and enhanced survival skills on land, at sea and in the air.

Aeromedical training of aircrew occurred at five aviation medicine sections at the Initial Training Squadrons. These sections were all equipped with decompression chambers that were designed only for training and demonstrations were carried out on the use of oxygen equipment, the effects of low oxygen on mental and physical performance, and the technique of clearing the ears on descent. The first chamber installed was located in the Melbourne University Physiology Department and was also equipped for research, which was then carried out by Professor Wright, a member of FPRC.

In 1944 an aviation medicine section was established at the Central Flying School, Point Cook, the first commander being Squadron Leader S.M. Dunstone. The section had a night vision training laboratory and worked with 1 FPRU. It also dealt with the adequacy of flying clothing and allied problems. About 1946, the aviation medicine section was separated from CFS and placed under the control of Base Squadron, Point Cook, where it remained until 1956.

Late in the War, an Aviation Medical Research Unit Laboratory was organised as a section of the Aircraft Performance Unit (APU), located at Laverton. It was staffed by a squadron leader medical officer and two other ranks, who were also employed to operate the decompression chamber at Melbourne University.

In 1944, the FPRC was first asked for proposals for the future development of aviation medicine and training in the RAAF. A school of aviation medicine, based on the RAF model, was envisaged as the logical culmination of the infrastructure that was already in existence for aviation training and research. By 1946, the idea of transforming the Aviation Medical Research Unit Laboratory and training section into a school that would also be responsible for medical mustering and aircrew aviation training, received strong endorsement. It was decided that the school would be located at Point Cook—buildings were available, the

decompression chamber was ready to use, and staff and associated sections were already available.

On 8 February 1956, the RAAF School of Aviation Medicine opened. It was the amalgamation of the Medical Training Section from 6 Hospital and the APU and the Aviation Medicine Section. The school was to provide instruction in aviation medicine and to assist aviation research in association with the Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU), at Laverton. The first Commanding Officer was Wing Commander W.L. Rait. The first medical officer, Squadron Leader P.A. O'Brien, was working on the Sabre jet research project at ARDU.

During the period 1956–1966, the school increased in size. Training wards for medical orderlies were set up, new lecture rooms added and an improved administration section gave greater scope for lecturers. By April 1958, a night vision room was available for aircrew training. Courses for medical orderlies, dental officers, aeromedical evacuation, continuing courses for aircrew, and updating of all those syllabuses meant research projects were not a high priority.

The last significant development during this period was the change of name to the RAAF Institute of Aviation Medicine on 1 July 1960.

The Institute's horizons broadened in the early 1960s, with involvement in NASA's Mercury Project, which took the Commanding Officer and others to Carnarvon, Western Australia, on several occasions from 1960 to 1963. Research, together with the resources of ARDU, was now carried out at the Aero-Medical Research Laboratory at Adelaide University, which was a civilian section of the Institute.

In 1969, two significant developments took place. Firstly, a humidity chamber was set up, which allowed investigation of an air-cooled flying suit. The other development was the launching of the Australian Medical Federation's post-graduate Diploma of Aviation Medicine at the Institute. Two RAAF medical officers were the first to enrol.

In 1970, Wing Commander Reed was appointed to co-ordinate lectures for the diploma. A 'Vertigo' disorientation trainer was ordered, projects on aircrew anthropometry begun, work on the air ventilated flying suit for the Macchi continued and toxic fume hazards in the Porter aircraft researched. The courses taught were increasingly medical in orientation and nurses, medical orderlies and medical officers all completed their training at the Institute.

In 1983, a visit by the Air Force Requirements Committee meant that new facilities were to be made available. From 1984 onwards, courses

were conducted at a hectic pace with 70–80 students per month regularly receiving instruction at the unit. Research, more in the form of evaluations, played an important role again, together with significant new research conducted with the Aeronautical Research Laboratory on 'through the canopy ejection'. In 1986, new versions of flying clothing with Nomex material were also being developed.

In 1987, a new policy established the Institute as the site for all new Central Aircrew Medical Boards (CAMB), carried out on aircrew members to ensure they are medically fit to fly following illness or injury. This change brought standardisation of investigation by the boards.

Research and training continued at the unit in the same fashion until the 1990s, when a new Commanding Officer again lead it in a new direction. Emphasis was on the importance of aviation medicine training to enhance flying safety and efficiency. A civilian research officer was employed for research and evaluation of aviation medicine problems.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

February 1956	—Wing Commander W.L. Rait
April 1958	—Squadron Leader J.M. Morrison
October 1959	—Squadron Leader W.J. Bishop
January 1966	—Wing Commander L.N. Walsh
January 1970	—Wing Commander G.W. Reed
January 1973	—Squadron Leader P.L. Green
July 1973	—Wing Commander B.J. Mahony
October 1973	—Wing Commander D.A. Smyth
January 1975	—Wing Commander B.J. Mahony
August 1975	—Squadron Leader G.J. Killer
August 1976	—Wing Commander R.J.L. Tebbutt
February 1977	—Wing Commander W.J. Smith
January 1978	—Wing Commander G.W. Reed
July 1978	—Wing Commander P.S. Wilkins
September 1979	—Wing Commander N.J. Roth
July 1980	—Squadron Leader P.H. Shumack
November 1982	—Squadron Leader L.A. Watson
April 1988	—Wing Commander G. Boothby
December 1991	—Wing Commander T.K. Austin
July 1993	—Wing Commander D.L. Emonson

RAAF LIAISON OFFICE INDIA

CHRONOLOGY

- 24 April 1943 —established at Air Headquarters
New Delhi, India
- 31 January 1946 —Office disbanded

NARRATIVE

The position of RAAF Liaison Office India was established at Air Headquarters, New Delhi, as a section of Overseas Headquarters London in April 1943. The function of the Office was to maintain a close liaison with the Royal Air Force (RAF) on all matters affecting RAAF personnel serving in the South-East Asia theatre of war.

The first liaison officer was Wing Commander G.A. Pape, who had been a barrister in Melbourne in civilian life. On his way to New Delhi, Wing Commander Pape conferred with Overseas Headquarters in London on duties concerned with the job and on policy matters.

On commencement of operations there were problems with office accommodation, but these were sorted out and an orderly room was established with one typist and a postal sergeant. The excessive Indian heat also caused stress and strain on the staff. Sometimes when the power failed and fans ceased to operate, staff members were forced to stop work. There were also problems with stomach complaints which gained the nickname 'Delhi Belly'.

The Office was responsible for RAAF aircrews who were attached to RAF Station Bhopal. At the end of hostilities, when these aircrews were waiting for repatriation, a war history cinematic unit arrived by rail to film the activities.

In November 1943 Air Headquarters India became Air Command South-East Asia, with Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten being Supreme Allied Commander.

The Office was involved in the Headquarters Cricket Association competition. There were games with the RAF and on one occasion the RAAF team lost by eight wickets. The Office took an Indian onto the establishment strength as a messenger. He was Muslim and was addressed by members of the staff as 'Percy'.

During 1944 an official war artist, a Captain W.A. Dargie, arrived in Delhi to undertake a six-week tour of squadrons and paint a series of RAAF personnel and their environs for the Australian War Museum (now the Australian War Memorial). Before his arrival in Delhi he had actually landed in Bombay and was claimed by the military authorities. He was not to be released as he had not obtained the necessary movement orders from Australia. He was made to do guard duties until the Liaison Office mapped out an itinerary for him, and he was able to get on his way. A fortnight's unproductive retention by the military in Bombay was a serious blow.

The victory over Japan was celebrated by a two-day stand down by all staff. Repatriation and an unscrambling scheme was commenced.

In November 1945 the HMT *Athlone Castle* left Bombay bound for Australia carrying 252 RAAF personnel from the command. Included were three war brides and one child. This draft completed the unscrambling scheme. With the exception of a few special cases, Liaison Office staff were the only RAAF personnel left in India. With their time drawing to an end, the non-commissioned officers and airmen of the liaison staff were guests of the officers at a dinner party at the Cafe Cathy, New Delhi. Chinese dishes were served and there was an adequate supply of Australian beer on hand. When the meal was completed, an accordion was produced and a sing-song began with the strains of *Waltzing Matilda*. There were 15 officers and airmen present and all agreed that the party had been a great success.

In January 1946 Wing Commander Pape left Delhi by air on a visit to Overseas Headquarters London. Arriving on 5 January he held a conference with the Commanding Officer and as a result a signal dated 10 January 1946 was despatched advising that the Office would close down on 31 January.

Wing Commander Pape returned to Delhi on 17 January 1946 and was then repatriated back to Australia. He had flown a total of 565 hours and travelled 89 296 miles in the course of his duties. Squadron Leader R.S. Cook assumed the appointment until the Office closed on 31 January.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

24 April 1943	—Wing Commander G.A. Pape
17 January 1946	—Squadron Leader R.S. Cook

RAAF LIAISON OFFICE MIDDLE EAST

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1 June 1944 | —established in Cairo |
| 31 January 1946 | —Office closed |

NARRATIVE

The RAAF Liaison Office Middle East was established in Cairo in June 1944. Its function was mainly as a welfare office which included the General Aircrew Repatriation Scheme, pay and allowances, promotions, uniform issue, public relations, and the medical and general welfare of RAAF members stationed in the Middle East. It came under the auspices of Middle Eastern Command which was controlled by Overseas Command in London. The first liaison officer was Group Captain J.E. Graham.

The General Aircrew Repatriation Scheme initiated the release of RAAF pilots from training establishments and squadrons in the United Kingdom for service in the Middle East as Kittyhawk pilots. There were problems with the changeover from flying Spitfires to Kittyhawks. The Liaison Office advised the new arrivals about the Kittyhawk. It always arranged for a Kittyhawk pilot to be present at their first briefing to discuss the merits and demerits of the aircraft.

The public relations officer provided news and photographs to Australia and London. The unit also produced a newsletter called *News from Australia*. Items of importance reported from Australia were published to keep personnel, so far from home, up to date. Censorship was a cause of great anxiety for Public Relations, most being enforced by the British authorities.

Comfort parcels were distributed from the Office and sometimes up to 5500 incoming letters passed through the mail office in a month. Wireless sets, cricket material and ping-pong sets were in great demand when a shipment arrived.

With the cessation of hostilities both in Europe and in the Pacific, the Liaison Office started to wind down its operations. In October 1945 the RAAF Post Office ceased to operate as a separate section and all postal

matters were taken over by the British Army Post Office. The Medical Section ceased to function and personnel were then based at Headquarters Royal Air Force sick quarters. Most of the other staff of the Office were repatriated to Australia, leaving a small party of equipment staff. A liaison staff dance was held at the Ezbekieh Club, Cairo, as a farewell tribute. Pay and accounting ceased on 7 January 1946. All files and records were despatched to RAAF Headquarters. Equipment and telephones were handed back to the Royal Air Force.

The Office closed on 31 January and a final report was presented to Overseas Headquarters London.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

6 December 1944	—Group Captain J.E. Graham
1 December 1945	—Wing Commander W.K. Wells

RAAF LIAISON STAFF MALAYA

CHRONOLOGY

- 14 September 1955 —established at Changi Royal Air Force Base
31 May 1958 —unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

RAAF Liaison Staff Malaya was formed at Royal Air Force Base Changi on 14 September 1955. The unit was established to look after 2 Airfield Construction Squadron personnel (and their families) who were building facilities such as housing and runways at Butterworth. Establishment was for seven personnel including a civilian finance officer whose job was to oversee the cost of the program. Group Captain E.G. Fyfe was appointed head of the liaison staff. In those days families and personnel arrived by ship. They were processed by the liaison staff then travelled to Butterworth.

In October 1956 riots started in the city of Singapore. The situation was tense and all living-out members of the liaison staff were issued with arms and ammunition before being allowed to proceed to their homes. No incidents occurred to necessitate use of weapons but the situation was grave. A member of I(B) Squadron and his family were stranded at Royal Air Force Base Changi owing to an imposed curfew. Accommodation for the night was made available by the unit. The arms and ammunition were carried for a few weeks and curfews continued till November.

With the completion of works at Butterworth and the arrival of the first chartered aircraft carrying RAAF personnel and families to be posted to 1 Squadron, the liaison unit was disbanded on 31 May 1958. All personnel were posted and relevant files were sent back to Australia.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 14 September 1955 —Group Captain E.G. Fyfe
14 March 1958 —Wing Commander J.A. Lombard

RAAF MUSEUM

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1952 | —formed as part of Base Squadron Point Cook, Vic. |
| 1966 | —appointment of full-time curator |
| 1972 | —moved to former RAAF College Headquarters building |
| 1986 | —appointment of full-time officer-in-charge |
| 31 March 1988 | —constituted as a formal unit of the RAAF |
| 1989 | —became a unit of RAAF Williams |
| November 1994 | —based at Point Cook, Vic. |

NARRATIVE

Although it did not become a formal unit of the Royal Australian Air Force until 1988, the RAAF Museum was actually formed in 1952 at the instigation of Air Marshal Sir George Jones who was, at that time, the Chief of the Air Staff. He saw it as a much needed facility to collect and preserve aircraft, memorabilia, photographs and films which helped to form a record of the then 40 years of Australian military aviation. Australia's involvement with military flying began in September 1912, when an Army order established a 'flight' of four officers, seven warrant officers and 32 air mechanics, continued throughout World War I with the Australian Flying Corps and, from 31 March 1921, with the Royal Australian Air Force. Material which formed part of this history came, at that time, from two world wars, the Korean conflict and peacetime activities.

The RAAF Museum's holdings were initially stored in several locations on base at RAAF Point Cook. The collection was at first administered by Base Squadron and later by Headquarters Point Cook. Because there were no permanent staff allotted to the Museum, activities were concentrated on collection, preservation and storage, and the public had little opportunity to view the growing collection. However, in 1966, a full-time curator was appointed to take over control of the operation. In 1972, the Museum moved to its current site at the former RAAF College Headquarters building and an assistant curator was appointed. Specialist assistance and advice was obtained from the Australian War Memorial,

the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the Museum of Victoria. A full-time officer-in-charge took over responsibility for the Museum in 1986 to manage the resource and formally develop the collection.

The Museum was constituted as a formal unit of the RAAF on 31 March 1988 with an establishment of six personnel. The first Commanding Officer was Squadron Leader P.A. Allen. Today, with a permanent staff of nine, assorted RAAF specialists attached for specific tasks, and the assistance of volunteers from the civilian community and the RAAF, the Museum continues to acquire, restore and display the collection. This comprises in excess of 400 000 separate items, plus upwards of one million photographs and films, and includes over 38 aircraft, ranging in condition from 'airworthy' to 'awaiting restoration'. The aircraft include: Fokker Triplane replica, Harvard, Mustang, Vampire, Sabre, Sopwith Pup replica, Tiger Moth, Ventura and Winjeel aeroplanes. Another 21 aircraft form the Museum's static display—a representation of Australia's military aviation involvement. The Museum's aircraft include privately owned aeroplanes and those kept in storage for the National Air Museum and comprises the largest collection of military aircraft in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Museum also maintains and displays a number of motor vehicles which were important in servicing the former AFC and RAAF aircraft. These include a Shellvoke and Drury fire truck, and a 1932 Chevrolet ambulance as well as many other wheeled vehicles.

An aircraft acquisition program is in place, and the Museum has identified certain aircraft as maintaining a significant place in AFC and RAAF operational history, listed them as possible valuable assets to be restored and displayed, and acquired some as funds and donations make it possible. Those identified include:

1914–1939

Bristol Boxkite, Maurice Farman Shorthorn (recently restored by staff and volunteers to static condition), Avro 504K, Avro Cadet

1939–1950

Kittyhawk, Boomerang, Mosquito, Dragon Rapide, Boston, Beaufighter, Beaufort, Liberator, Avro Anson, Catalina, Ventura, Sunderland

1950–Present

C130 Hercules, Phantom F-4E, Mirage, Macchi, CT4 Trainer

The Museum's aircraft have been welcome participants at the growing number of air shows held by aircraft enthusiasts, including the Bankstown Air Fair, the Dubbo Air Display and the Geelong Air Show. At the air show held to commemorate the 75th anniversary of military aviation, over 45 000 people attended Point Cook to view the flying displays by Museum aircraft and see the static displays manned by Museum personnel and volunteers. Museum aircraft have also taken part in flypasts at such events as the Australian Formula One Grand Prix, the Bathurst 1000, the Moomba festival and the Australian Football League grand final.

The Museum is presently broken into various sections which include administration, aircraft maintenance and restoration, curatorial workshop, library, commercial sales and the equipment section. The Museum has its own souvenir shop and also runs a thriving mail order service. Museum personnel take part in mobile displays at the various air shows and other public occasions, and conduct tours of the Museum's holdings for visiting groups from the public and the Services. The Museum's staff and volunteers are an enthusiastic and hard working group of technicians and enthusiasts who are dedicated to preserving the heritage of Australia's military aviation history. They share with the RAAF Museum its mission, which is to 'Preserve and promote RAAF Heritage', that is 'Those items and values which embody the spirit and traditions of the Australian Flying Corps and the Royal Australian Air Force which have existed and evolved from the inception of the Australian Flying Corps to today'.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1 March 1988	—Squadron Leader P.A. Allen
1 December 1988	—Squadron Leader J.M. Strickland
1 December 1990	—Squadron Leader J.C. Clark
1 May 1991	—Squadron Leader J.P. Matthews
1 December 1994	—Squadron Leader R.P. Walpole

RAAF PROVOST UNIT

At Service



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 6 April 1942 | —RAAF Service Police Unit formed |
| 16 January 1961 | —reformed as RAAF Provost Unit |
| March 1979 | —re-named RAAF Police Service |
| 12 February 1981 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

The provost service within the RAAF began in a very small way during 1930, when service police were first established for unit duties. World War II found the RAAF totally unprepared for its provost requirements. Towards the end of 1940 the first Provost Marshal and Assistant Provost Marshal were appointed, but it was not until 6 April 1942 that the RAAF Service Police Unit was properly established and organised.

The headquarters of the Service Police Unit was formed in Melbourne with detachments established in each State and overseas. Specialist sections were formed: the Special Investigations Branch, to handle serious crime; the Port Detachment to prevent large-scale desertions; mobile patrols for traffic duty; street patrols to ensure good conduct by the troops in the streets; and the Compassionate Section to handle all matters within this field. Finally in November 1942, the WAAF were enlisted as service policewomen.

After 1942, the provost service grew rapidly and at the end of the War it numbered over 1000 members with some 50 officers.

To provide an organisation capable of smooth transition from wartime to peacetime conditions, the RAAF provost service was

re-organised and on 16 January 1961 was formed as the RAAF Provost Unit with the following establishments:

- Headquarters
- Victorian Section
- New South Wales Section
- South Queensland Section
- North Queensland Section
- Northern Territory Section
- South Australian Section
- Western Australian Section

On 22 November 1962, when His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh opened the VI British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Perth, the RAAF Provost Unit provided a service police security guard for the RAAF royal transport aircraft. Several detachments of the same unit were also employed on crowd, traffic control and security duties associated with the royal tour the following year.

On 18–22 November 1963, the Provost Marshal's conference was held at Headquarters RAAF Provost Unit, and was attended by all RAAF provost officers, including the Provost Marshal. On 19, 23 and 28 November 1963, crowd and traffic control duties were carried out by Unit detachments at Townsville, Edinburgh and Darwin during displays to the general public of USAF B-47 and C-124 aircraft. On 20–23 October 1966, during the visit of Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States, the RAAF provost units provided traffic control and security services at Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane and Townsville.

On 22 December 1967, RAAF Provost Unit Victoria was allocated the task of guarding the RAF aircraft conveying His Royal Highness Prince Charles and party, and all service aircraft parked at Essendon during the activity associated with the memorial service for the late Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Harold Holt.

On 17 February 1969, 14 Security Guard Course commenced at 7 Stores Depot, Toowoomba, following the re-location of the Police Training Centre from 1 Stores Depot, Tottenham. On 24 April 1969, 14 Security Guard Course graduated at 7 Stores Depot.

On 18–29 May 1969, Squadron Leader M.L. Longhand, Assistant Provost Marshal, South Queensland, visited units in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra to conduct a survey into the causes of crime and road accidents in the RAAF. The possibility of a link between excessive drinking in the Service and accident rates was also examined.

11 Advance Service Police Course commenced at the Victorian University Squadron on 2 June 1969. There were 13 members of the service police mustering on the course, all of sergeant rank, including seven from unit service police sections. On 18 July 1969, all 13 members graduated.

1 Investigators Course commenced at the Victoria Police Detective Training School in Melbourne on 18 August 1969. This course replaced the detectives course which was previously open to members of the RAAF. The new course now covered all aspects of crime investigation procedures and techniques. On 8–11 August 1969, two officers from RAAF Provost Unit Victoria attended the Royal Australian Clinical Institute's National Symposium on Forensic Sciences held at Melbourne University and on 12 December 1969, 33 Basic Service Police Course, comprising 16 members, graduated at RAAF Base Point Cook.

From 1973 to 1978, many training courses were held at Headquarters RAAF Provost Unit, including basic service police, advanced service police, service police, service police drug investigation, and service police field security courses.

In March 1979, the RAAF Provost Unit was re-named the RAAF Police Service. Organisational change within the Unit, however, did not become effective until 1 September 1979. At this time, the Unit relinquished control of RAAF police offices throughout Australia—from this point onwards, they were administratively controlled by RAAF support units in the respective capital cities, Headquarters Support Command Unit in Melbourne, and base squadrons in both Townsville and Darwin.

On 12 February 1981, Headquarters RAAF Police was disbanded.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

6 April 1942	—Squadron Leader E.W. Rosewarne
20 July 1946–	
16 January 1961	—no record of Commanding Officer
16 January 1961	—Wing Commander J.M. O'Neill
1 December 1965	—Wing Commander I.C. Collie
1 May 1971	—Wing Commander J.T. Lindsay
1 March 1975	—Wing Commander V.D. Parker
1 December 1977	—Wing Commander J.D. Brodie

RAAF PUBLICATIONS UNIT

The Precise Words



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 2 August 1943 | —RAAF Printing Unit formed under command of 4 (Maintenance) Group |
| 12 July 1945 | —moved to Barry Street, Carlton, Vic. |
| January 1946 | —re-named RAAF Printing and Publications Unit (RPPU) |
| January 1946 | —printing facilities moved to Albert Park Barracks |
| June 1946 | —Publications and Maps Section moved to Albert Park Barracks |
| September 1947 | —RPPU Bulk Store re-located from Benalla to Albert Park Barracks |
| October 1964 | —RPPU re-located to RAAF Laverton |
| 30 June 1972 | —Printing Flight disbanded |
| 1 July 1972 | —reformed as RAAF Publications Unit |
| 8 January 1993 | —RAAFPUB and SOPUBS amalgamated |
| November 1994 | —based at Laverton, Vic. |

NARRATIVE

Early in 1943 the Air Board decided that the RAAF needed its own printing facilities. Plans were made for the formation of a printing unit, and the Air Board allocated £16 550 (\$33 100) for the provision of printing machinery with the agreement of the Treasury printing advisers. On 2 August 1943, RAAF Printing Unit (RPU) was formed at 541 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, as a separate self-accounting unit under the command

of 4 (Maintenance) Group. Also on 2 August 1943, Pilot Officer W.E. Newton arrived to command the new unit. Posting of other personnel to RPU started on 3 August 1943 and during September specialist printing staff and machinery arrived. By 30 September 1943, the Unit had a strength of two officers and 29 airmen and the first printing press was received on 8 October 1943. Early in 1944, a Publications Section was added to RPU and the Unit was in full production. Typical of the material printed were various service forms, Air Publications, Amendment Lists, Administrative Orders, Orders General, Aircraft Orders and various magazines.

On 12 July 1945, RPU re-located from Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, to 47 Barry Street, Carlton. By mid-1945 the Unit strength had grown to two officers, 65 airmen, nine airwomen and a V8 Ford utility truck. 1946 saw further changes for the Unit with a name change in January 1946 to RAAF Printing and Publications Unit (RPPU), and another re-location of the printing facilities from Carlton to Albert Park Barracks in South Melbourne. Command of the Unit was handed to Flight Lieutenant C.H. Spurgeon in January 1946.

Albert Park Barracks was to be the first permanent home of RPPU with the move of Publications and Maps Section to the barracks in June 1946. By June 1946, the Unit had a strength of two officers, 77 airmen and 17 airwomen against total establishment of 126 personnel. While personnel strength grew at the end of World War II, there was little apparent change in the type of material printed at the Unit with service forms appearing as a major production item. There also appears to have been a lucrative, albeit illegal, cottage industry at RPPU. Unit history sheets for 8 July 1946 record the arrest by civil police of a sergeant, a corporal and two leading aircraftmen for 'theft of paper and illegal manufacture of cigarette papers'.

August 1946 saw the 'civilianisation' of several wartime RAAF posts and at 30 August 1946, the RPPU had a strength of four officers, 45 other ranks and 35 civilians. In September 1947 the RPPU Bulk Store was re-located from Benalla, Victoria, to Albert Park Barracks to overcome time-consuming travel between the two.

From 1948 to the early 1960s, RPPU went through a period of geographic and production stability and relative anonymity as a unit. In the early 1960s a number of major and costly aircraft accidents, which could have been attributable to faulty documentation, prompted the then

Chief of Air Staff to appoint a working party to examine the RAAF publications system.

In July 1962, the Department of Defence discussed the feasibility of integrating RAAF and Army printing units into a joint printery to be situated at Caulfield, Victoria. In January 1963, the Minister for Air announced that this was not cost-effective but that the RAAF was to consider re-locating RPPU, and the feasibility of integration into the Government Printing Office. RPPU's existence remained under threat until October 1963 at which time it was decided that RPPU would be retained but re-located to RAAF Base Laverton. The Unit's move to Laverton started with Publications Flight in March 1964 and was completed by October 1964.

In October 1968, the Department of Defence announced that it planned to amalgamate the RAAF, Army and Department of Supply printers into one establishment within the Department of Supply, to be known as the Defence Printing Establishment. DPE started operation in 1972, and its creation led to the eventual disbanding of Printing Flight at RPPU on 30 June 1972.

On 31 July 1970, RPPU relinquished its longstanding control of all maps and charts to the Aeronautical Information Section (AIS) at Chancery House. On completion of the transfer, AIS took over the responsibility for storage and distribution of all aeronautical maps and charts. 1971 also saw another 'last' for RPPU—with the impending demise of Printing Flight, the last *RAAF News* to come off RPPU's presses was printed in September 1971 with a run of 22 000 copies.

The recommendations of the early 1960s CAS Working Party's examination of the publications system were finally actioned with the formation of a Staff Officer Publications Division within Headquarters Support Command on 1 July 1972. Simultaneously with the formation of SOPUBS, RPPU was re-organised. The printing element was transferred to the new Defence Printing Establishment at Brunswick, Victoria, and the publications element (receipt, storage, bindery and despatch activities) remained at Laverton under the command of Officer Commanding Laverton. Also on 1 July 1972 RAAF Publications and Printing Unit (RPPU) reformed as RAAF Publications Unit (RAAFPU) with functional responsibility to SOPUBS in Headquarters Support Command.

The disbanding of Printing Flight at RPPU in June 1972 eventually led to the redundancy of the RAAF Printing Trades in April 1973, but most members remained at RAAFPU as bookbinders. In 1977 the

bookbinder mustering was disbanded and a new mustering formed—Publications Assistant.

On 2 March 1981, the Unit received its official crest as approved by HM Queen Elizabeth II. The Unit's role of producing publications for use in the control and guidance of the RAAF is aptly described in the motto 'The Precise Words'.

On 18 January 1993 there was a further re-organisation of RAAFPU and SOPUBS and RAAFPU amalgamated into one unit, but retained the name RAAFPU. In the electronic information age now upon us, large scale storage and production of hard copy information is becoming less cost-effective. The technology of our weaponry is advancing very quickly and the publications support for the future RAAF will need to be just as advanced.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1943	—Pilot Officer W.E. Newton
1946	—Flight Lieutenant C.H. Spurgeon
1946	—Squadron Leader D. Swann
1947	—Squadron Leader D. Sowerbutts
1948	—Flight Lieutenant W.C. Gates
1949	—Flight Lieutenant L.G. Viney
1957	—Squadron Leader W.R. King
1962	—Squadron Leader F.A. Lang
1966	—Squadron Leader R.W. Davey
1969	—Squadron Leader W.E. Richardson
1972	—Squadron Leader A.J. Craze
1976	—Squadron Leader L.J. Woodgate
1978	—Squadron Leader D.J. Manson
1980	—Flying Officer A.F. O'Reilly
1980	—Squadron Leader P.H. Moxey
1982	—Squadron Leader J.H. Coombes
1985	—Squadron Leader I.D. Lane
1987	—Squadron Leader P.A. Greenwood
1988	—Squadron Leader B. Vitnell
1989	—Squadron Leader A.F. Charles
1993	—Wing Commander I.M. Little

RAAF SABRE ADVISORY UNIT— INDONESIA

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 6 October 1972 | —formed at Williamstown, NSW |
| 16 October 1972 | —deployed to Iswahyudi, Indonesia |
| 14 February 1975 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

The RAAF Sabre Advisory Unit was formed at RAAF Base Williamstown, New South Wales, on 6 October 1972 and deployed to Iswahyudi, Indonesia, on 16 October. The Unit was to oversee the transfer of, and training in the use of, 16 Sabre aircraft which were given to the Indonesian Government as a gift. The aircraft were officially handed over on 9 April 1973.

The Unit was involved in many official and non-official functions, which included the official handover ceremony of the Sabre aircraft and the provision of a holding party at the official opening of Canberra House in Surabaya.

A social highlight was the co-ordination of a race meeting, which was contested by locals riding mountain ponies, to celebrate Melbourne Cup Day.

The RAAF Sabre Advisory Unit disbanded on 14 February 1975.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 6 October 1972 | —Squadron Leader D.A. Robertson |
| 8 August 1973 | —Squadron Leader P.J. Hackett |
| 6 February 1974 | —Squadron Leader B.D. Searle |
| 24 July 1974 | —Squadron Leader A.A. Page |

RAAF SUPPORT UNIT ADELAIDE

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 7 February 1977 | —established at North Adelaide, SA |
| 14 February 1986 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

RAAF Support Unit Adelaide was established at Barton Terrace, North Adelaide, to provide administrative services for RAAF elements in Adelaide. The Unit was under the temporary command of Flight Lieutenant C.J. Giddings, who was also appointed as regional liaison officer for Air Training Corps units in South Australia.

The Unit welfare club conducted a charity night on 31 March 1979, when \$1200 was raised towards the Anthony Nolan Appeal (Anthony Nolan was a bone marrow recipient). Cadets marched in to the Unit for weekly Air Training Corps parades.

A parade through the city was held on 6 June 1981, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Air Training Corps. The following day a tree was planted and a plaque unveiled at Adelaide Airport by Sir Arthur Barratt, the original Commandant of the South Australian Air Training Corps.

On 30 March 1985, the Commanding Officer attended an Air Force commemorative service at the Adelaide War Memorial for the 64th anniversary of the formation of the RAAF.

RAAF Support Unit Adelaide was disbanded on 14 February 1986.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 9 August 1977 | —Squadron Leader B.J. Marriott |
| 2 January 1978 | —Squadron Leader A.R. Barrett |
| 12 May 1980 | —Squadron Leader M.E. Guest |
| 19 December 1983 | —Squadron Leader T.M. Morrissy |

RAAF SUPPORT UNIT BRISBANE

Tenacious of Purpose



CHRONOLOGY

- 7 February 1977 —established at Kangaroo Point, Qld
14 March 1988 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

RAAF Support Unit Brisbane was established at Shafton House, Thorn Street, Kangaroo Point, to provide administrative services for RAAF elements in Brisbane. The Commanding Officer was also appointed as regional liaison officer for Air Training Corps units in Queensland.

Undergraduates administered by the Unit attended the University of Queensland and the Queensland Institute of Technology.

On 29 May 1980, the Unit hosted a luncheon for members of the Early Birds Association, membership of which requires an association with aviation prior to World War II. Recruiting Centre Brisbane held its annual career night on 7 July 1980; approximately 250 people attended, and considerable interest was shown in all avenues of entry to the RAAF.

The Unit was disbanded in March 1988.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 7 February 1977 —Squadron Leader E.R. Erhardt
5 December 1978 —Squadron Leader G.W. Kirk
10 January 1980 —Wing Commander R.J. Crimmins
14 January 1981 —Wing Commander B. Langby
February 1983 —Wing Commander P.J. Andrews
23 October 1985 —Wing Commander P.F. Peterson

RAAF SUPPORT UNIT HOBART

Faithful Support



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 7 February 1977 | —established at Hobart, Tas. |
| 30 June 1992 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

RAAF Support Unit Hobart was established at 8 Fitzroy Place to support RAAF activities and represent the RAAF in Tasmania. The Commanding Officer of the Unit also held the positions of regional liaison officer for the Tasmanian Air Training Corps, and the senior Air Force officer Tasmania. Wing Commander Murray and Wing Commander Wagner were both appointed as honorary aide-de-camp to the Governor-General.

The Unit hosted open days in conjunction with the Tasmanian Squadron of the Air Training Corps, and in July 1990, the Commanding Officer became the RAAF representative on the Australia Day Committee.

The Unit disbanded at the end of June 1992.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7 February 1977 | —Wing Commander D.J. Stubbs |
| 20 December 1977 | —Wing Commander K.J. Murray |
| 16 December 1980 | —Wing Commander W.F. Parsons |
| 20 December 1982 | —Wing Commander P.J. Wagner |
| 18 December 1984 | —Wing Commander S.A. Bryce |
| 22 August 1986 | —Wing Commander R.J. Parsons |
| 16 December 1988 | —Wing Commander M.G. Deards |
| 7 January 1991 | —Wing Commander G.J. Johnston |

RAAF SUPPORT UNIT PERTH

Support and Assist



CHRONOLOGY

- 7 February 1977 —established at Claremont, WA
30 September 1987 —Unit disbanded

NARRATIVE

RAAF Support Unit Perth was established at Claremont, to provide administrative services for RAAF elements in Perth. In addition, the Commanding Officer was appointed as regional liaison officer for Air Training Corps units in Western Australia and was frequently present at parades of Air Training Corps units to award end-of-year prizes.

In October 1977, visits were made to country flights of the Western Australian Air Training Corps; a wreath was laid at the 19th annual Darwin Day ceremony of the Air Force Association on 18 February 1979; on 11 February 1981, members of the Unit visited the United States amphibious assault ship *Tarawa*; and during May 1984, the Commanding Officer attended functions commemorating the Battle of the Coral Sea and the 40th anniversary of the Battle for Crete. The Unit hosted a reunion of about 150 members of the Australian branch of the Beaufort Association on Anzac Day 1985.

RAAF Support Unit Perth was disbanded on 30 September 1987.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 14 February 1977 —Squadron Leader C.deC. Rampant
13 January 1981 —Squadron Leader W.F. Walters
12 October 1982 —Squadron Leader K.J. Allanson
21 December 1985 —Squadron Leader E.G. Voumard

RAAF SUPPORT UNIT SYDNEY

Premier Support



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 7 February 1977 | —established at Millers Point, NSW |
| 25 September 1981 | —moved to Hayes Street, Neutral Bay |
| 1 November 1987 | —Unit disbanded |

NARRATIVE

RAAF Support Unit Sydney was established at 7 Hickson Road, Millers Point, to provide administrative services for RAAF elements in Sydney. In addition, the Commanding Officer was appointed as regional liaison officer for Air Training Corps units in New South Wales. The history sheets for this Unit also incorporated Movement Control Office Sydney and the NSW Air Training Corps.

The Commanding Officer conducted lectures in general service knowledge and customs of the Service for undergraduates attached to the Unit and studying at universities and colleges in the Sydney area.

On 11 January 1980, the Commanding Officer was appointed an honorary aide-de-camp to the Governor-General of New South Wales.

On 25 September 1981, the Unit moved to Neutral Bay, in company with the NSW RAAF Police.

The last entry in the Unit History Record was in November 1987.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 7 February 1977 | —Squadron Leader G.H. Johnstone |
| 14 December 1979 | —Wing Commander D.B. Sutherland |
| 13 December 1982 | —Wing Commander G.J. Keleher |
| 6 January 1986 | —Wing Commander C.J.S. Best |

RAAF UNIT HONG KONG

Trust the Truth



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| March 1964 | —first entry in diary |
| November 1976 | —re-named RAAF Unit Hong Kong |
| January 1985 | —last entry in Unit History Record |

NARRATIVE

RAAF Unit Hong Kong began as Detachment 'A' of Base Squadron Butterworth, with a staff of 79. The first diary entry was recorded in March 1964 when a mumps epidemic was raging amongst Unit members and their dependants. In May, there was an outbreak of cholera in the colony, and members were reminded to keep their inoculations up to date.

Sport played a big part in the lives of Unit members, and during September success was achieved in hockey, golf and ten pin bowling. In 1964, 20 orphans from the Mu Kuang orphanage at Kowloon attended the children's Christmas treat at Little Sai Wan. During February 1965, members participated in squash, darts and tennis tournaments.

12 June 1966 was an historic day for the colony when 17 inches of rain fell in 24 hours, 4½ inches of which fell in one hour, causing enormous damage and the loss of 63 lives. Most RAAF families were cut off temporarily by landslides, but suffered no injuries. Unit efficiency was affected for six days.

During May 1967 civil disturbances and riots rocked the colony, but the only disruption to Unit members and their families was the cancellation of the high school transport for five days, as the vehicle's

route took it along the edge of several trouble spots. The disruptions continued throughout the following months, resulting in June in delays for the receipt of members' personal effects. Fruit and vegetable supplies from the mainland were cut off, doubling the cost of local supplies on the market. Water restrictions were imposed, with supplies only available for four hours every second day. The RAAF hirings in North Point were on the fringe of one of the main trouble areas during the civil disturbances in July 1967, but fortunately members and their families were not caught up in any incidents. The Commander British Forces placed Macau out of bounds to all service personnel. During August 1967, minor civil disturbances continued, with many bombs, both real and fake, being placed and exploded indiscriminately throughout the colony. Two tropical storms within 10 days of each other slightly relieved the water supply situation.

During October and November, bomb explosions resulted in the deaths of and injuries to military and police personnel. The Unit was fortunate in being only slightly inconvenienced by minor traffic hold-ups due to bomb dispersal activities. The civil unrest continued with minor left wing activity until the middle of 1968. In June of that year, much damage was caused and many lives lost through large rock falls and landslides after very heavy rains. The operational commitment of the station was disrupted for a few days until clearance of the road was carried out.

The colony was declared a cholera infected area from 6 to 26 July 1969, when the disease was detected in Kowloon.

During April 1971, members of the Unit celebrated the golden jubilee of the RAAF by attending a ball at the Hong Kong Hyatt Hotel, and a cocktail party and dinner dance at the Hong Kong Hilton.

During the months of June, July and August 1971, the colony was lashed by three typhoons—'Freda', 'Lucy' and 'Rose'. During typhoon 'Rose', winds reached 150 miles per hour, and the city was blacked out, with interruptions to the power supply for the next three days while repairs were effected. Thirty-four ocean going vessels were blown aground at various points around the harbour. A Macau-Hong Kong passenger ferry capsized with the loss of 88 lives.

From 17 to 19 June 1972, Hong Kong had the heaviest rainfall for 86 years, when between 30 and 40 inches fell. Typhoon 'Dot' passed within 10 miles of the colony on 17 July 1973.

At the other extreme, in September 1974, water restrictions were put into force from 2200 to 0600 each day until typhoons 'Carmen' and 'Elaine' brought welcome rains during October.

The detachment became known as RAAF Unit Hong Kong as of November 1976. On its second anniversary in November 1978, the Unit became eligible for the award of a unit badge, and a design was submitted.

The first step in a major re-organisation of the Unit came into effect on 13 May 1982, when 25 members and their dependants left for Australia. The last entry in the Unit History Record was recorded in January 1985, when staff consisted of nine RAAF, seven Army and three RAN personnel.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

March 1964	—Squadron Leader M.J. Tate
April 1965	—Squadron Leader F.K. Carrick
17 July 1967	—Squadron Leader A.R. Baxter
19 January 1970	—Squadron Leader A.R. Bishop
14 December 1971	—Squadron Leader G.A. Perske
14 December 1973	—Squadron Leader J.V. Rossiter
24 December 1975	—Squadron Leader F.E. Bolton
27 January 1978	—Squadron Leader J.I. Gavey
24 January 1980	—Squadron Leader R.A. Hiern
21 July 1982	—Squadron Leader R.M. Baxter
June 1984	—Squadron Leader R.W. Schroder

RAAF UNIVERSITY SQUADRONS

NARRATIVE

RAAF University Squadrons were formed in the early 1950s in each State. They were formed to instruct suitable undergraduates in the manners, behaviour and principles of officer service in the RAAF as well as study of the Air Force methods applicable to undergraduate studies. Personnel served two years whilst studying and then went on for a further five years as officers of the Citizen Air Force Reserve if they graduated on completion of studies. It was also hoped that they might join the regular Air Force. The Squadrons were broken up into flights named Flying, Medical, Equipment, Administrative and Technical. Establishment numbers fluctuated from squadron to squadron.

In March 1967 Sydney and Adelaide University Squadrons changed their titles to New South Wales University Squadron and South Australian University Squadron respectively. With the commencement of National Service for all young men turning 21, enlistments at the Squadrons increased—if students were Squadron members, they were deferred from the National Service ballot. The Department of Labour regularly required reports of personnel still enrolled or students who had dropped out of the Squadrons. During the Vietnam war a number of the Squadrons were the targets of anti-war graffiti and in Western Australia a petrol bomb was thrown at the premises housing the Squadron at that time.

With the end of conscription, numbers in the Squadrons started to decline. The Government of the day decided it was not cost-effective to keep them going and between August and December 1973 all the Squadrons were disbanded.

NEW SOUTH WALES UNIVERSITY SQUADRON

Eadem Mens Alta Petendi (In the Same Mind of Seeking the Heights)



CHRONOLOGY

- 16 October 1950 —formed Recruiting Centre, Sydney, NSW
31 October 1973 —Squadron disbanded

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 16 November 1950 —Flight Lieutenant T.A. Berry
1 August 1951 —Flight Lieutenant L. Hawes
2 February 1953 —Squadron Leader C. Brackenridge
22 November 1954 —Squadron Leader W.D. Ephgrave
16 January 1956 —Squadron Leader E.B. Goldner
8 October 1956 —Squadron Leader G.A. Ross
19 January 1959 —Squadron Leader J.L. Ingate
22 January 1962 —Squadron Leader B.M. Thomas
24 May 1963 —Squadron Leader J.R. Newson
22 March 1967 —Squadron Leader T.L. McLeod
12 January 1970 —Squadron Leader E.L. Watson
21 May 1973 —Squadron Leader J.R. Newson

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY SQUADRON

Peritus Ac Paratus (Skilled and Ready)



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 31 October 1950 | —formed at Recruiting Centre, Brisbane, Qld |
| 25 August 1973 | —Squadron disbanded |

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2 November 1950 | —Flight Lieutenant W.O.K. Hewett |
| 31 October 1952 | —Flight Lieutenant N.S. Eliot |
| 29 October 1954 | —Flight Lieutenant T.C. McGrath |
| 22 June 1956 | —Flight Lieutenant J.T. Dollisson |
| 1 July 1958 | —Squadron Leader R.B. Aronsen |
| 28 November 1959 | —Squadron Leader G. Hughes |
| 24 June 1964 | —Squadron Leader Goy |
| 1 January 1967 | —Squadron Leader D.L. Dunstan |
| 22 April 1968 | —Squadron Leader K.D. Clark |
| 24 January 1969 | —Squadron Leader L.R. Watkin |
| 28 February 1973 | —Squadron Leader J.J. Nicholson |

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY SQUADRON

Astra Pete Discendo (Seek the Stars by Learning)



CHRONOLOGY

- 10 November 1950 —formed at the Adelaide Recruiting Centre, SA
- 11 January 1967 —name changed to South Australian University Squadron
- 28 September 1973 —Squadron disbanded

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 10 November 1950 —Flight Lieutenant E.J. Dibden
- 20 April 1953 —Squadron Leader W. Addison
- 13 December 1954 —Flight Lieutenant G.F. Laidlaw
- 21 August 1955 —Squadron Leader T.W. Murphy
- 18 January 1960 —Squadron Leader A.H. Clark
- 2 January 1962 —Squadron Leader E.I. Lane
- 5 January 1970 —Squadron Leader G.W. Jones
- 4 January 1972 —Squadron Leader P. Dunn

TASMANIAN UNIVERSITY SQUADRON

Ingeniis Patuit Campus (There is an Open Field for Talent)



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 3 November 1950 | —formed at Hobart Recruiting Centre, Tas. |
| 25 August 1973 | —Squadron disbanded |

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 13 January 1950 | —Squadron Leader S.J. Nichol |
| 21 October 1952 | —Squadron Leader H.B. Newham |
| 30 November 1953 | —Squadron Leader V.D. Kernmis |
| 6 September 1957 | —Wing Commander H.W. Connolly |
| 9 January 1959 | —Squadron Leader G.L. Waller |
| 21 January 1961 | —Wing Commander L.N. Kroll |
| 14 December 1963 | —Wing Commander I.P. Allen |
| 22 October 1968 | —Wing Commander J. O'Neill |
| 7 December 1971 | —Wing Commander W.E. Dixon |

VICTORIAN UNIVERSITY SQUADRON

Strength From Knowledge



CHRONOLOGY

- 25 October 1950 —formed at Albert Park Barracks,
Melbourne, Vic.
18 October 1973 —Squadron disbanded

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- 25 October 1950 —Flight Lieutenant C.J. Melchert
11 January 1954 —Squadron Leader C.G. Harvey
11 December 1955 —Squadron Leader T.S. Fairbairn
14 January 1957 —Squadron Leader L. Britt
5 June 1957 —Squadron Leader E.B. Goldner
23 December 1959 —Squadron Leader J.J. Lynch
30 January 1961 —Squadron Leader J.A. Whitehead
16 December 1963 —Squadron Leader S.W. Williamson
15 April 1965 —Squadron Leader C.G. Kilsby
1 March 1966 —Squadron Leader A.H. Clark
22 January 1968 —Squadron Leader W.C. Keritz
23 August 1968 —Squadron Leader B.S. Lodge
30 June 1971 —Squadron Leader D.H. Gibbs
20 January 1972 —Squadron Leader R.J. Montgomery

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY SQUADRON

Scientia Potentia (Knowledge is Strength)



CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 30 October 1950 | —formed at Hackett Drive, Perth, WA |
| 24 August 1973 | —Squadron disbanded |

COMMANDING OFFICERS

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 30 October 1950 | —Flight Lieutenant K.R. Rodd |
| 23 July 1951 | —Flight Lieutenant H.V. Shearn |
| 24 September 1952 | —Flight Lieutenant E.G. Ramsay |
| 19 October 1953 | —Flight Lieutenant C.H. Mawby |
| 4 January 1955 | —Squadron Leader W.R. Berriman |
| 25 March 1960 | —Squadron Leader F.L. Hill |
| 6 August 1962 | —Squadron Leader J.W. Newham |
| 17 December 1963 | —Squadron Leader H.W. Thwaites |
| 22 June 1965 | —Squadron Leader L.R. Watkin |
| 17 April 1967 | —Squadron Leader H.S. Rees |
| 28 January 1972 | —Squadron Leader I.G. Rourke |
| 8 January 1973 | —Squadron Leader G.W.E. Munrowd |



In November 1992 it was proposed that, as part of the RAAF 75th Anniversary celebrations to be held in 1996, a history of each unit of the RAAF should be prepared. Each history was to be based on the relevant Unit History Record and information up to November 1994 included. The concept was to produce a concise history of each unit which would also serve as a basic reference for further research, and the realisation of that concept has resulted in this unique work.

Volume 1: Introduction, Bases, Supporting Organisations

Volume 2: Fighter Units

Volume 3: Bomber Units

Volume 4: Maritime and Transport Units

Volume 5: Radar Units

Volume 6: Logistics Units

Volume 7: Maintenance Units

Volume 8: Training Units

Volume 9: Ancillary Units

Volume 10: Chiefs of the Air Staff, Aircraft, Bibliography



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