

Flying Doctor.

Passengers in the Caribou at Butterworth can be forgiven for looking askance when they see the senior medical officer and the base engineering officer occupying the pilots' seats.

But GPCAPT 'Tiny' Ashbrook and SQNLDR Dennis Gardiner have more than 5,000 hours Caribou experience between them and contribute to the operation of a unique section at Butterworth.

The group captain has combined engineering and flying careers in the RAAF while SQNLDR Gardiner, a former GD pilot, transferred to the medical branch, completing his medical training in 1980.

The Butterworth Caribou is operated by the Headquarters flight and maintained by No 478 Squadron. Permanent members of the flight are FLTLT Darryl Redding, a former F-111 and maritime navigator before completing his pilot training and SGT Brett Tuohy, a Mirage airframe fitter and now the Caribou flight engineer.

Fourth pilot is GPCAPT Stew Back who, as executive officer, flies both Mirage and Caribou.

The team flies mainly in Peninsular Malaysia, with occasional trips to Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines in support of RAAF requirements.

During a recent navigation and instrument training flight into Thailand the crew took the opportunity to fly along the old Burma Railway down to the Bridge on the River Kwai.