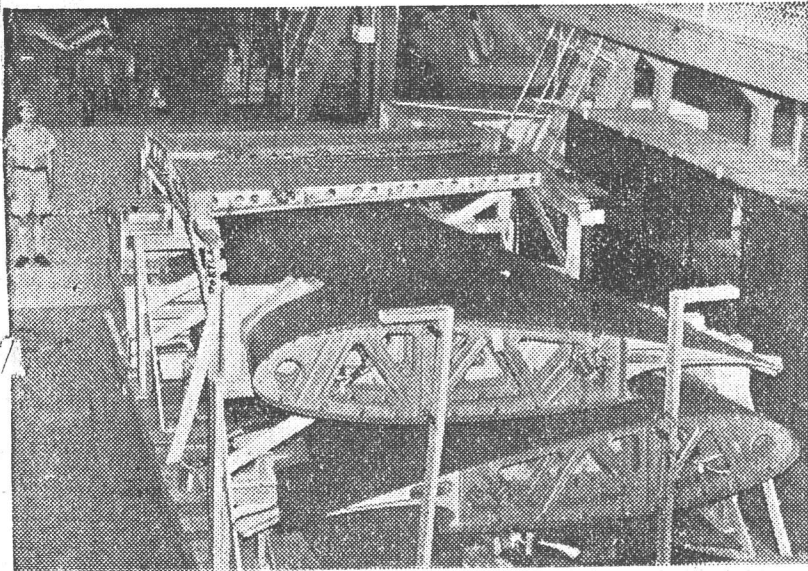


BEAUTY AND POWER. Sharply banking above the R.A.A.F. Station at Richmond, a new Lockheed Hudson Bomber shows that there is beauty in her lines.



WINGS OF A HUDSON. Just out of the packing case are these wings for one of the new Lockheed Hudson bombers. This photo was taken in the store at the R.A.A.F. Station, Richmond.

A16-

Insignia adorning Calibration Flight's Hudson, familiar though tantalising sight to lads in far north.



WINGS 3.8.43

Plane's secret of flight into oblivion

A CENTRAL Queenslander has been trying to unravel the mysterious disappearance of an RAAF Lockheed Hudson and seven crew in the closing days of World War II.

The aircraft went missing in the military training area of Shoalwater Bay, north of Yeppoon. Although attention at the time was focused on the conflict in the Pacific, an extensive air and sea search was mounted but failed to find a trace.

Wayne Wanstall, of Keppel Sands, formerly with RAAF security police, has extensively researched the disappearance.

It was on July 23, 1945 that the RAAF Lockheed Hudson was last seen along the Capricorn Coast. As it passed, Central Queenslanders were preparing for a tropical storm.

Fishermen noticed the silver Hudson was carefully following the coastline. Its navigator, aware of the storm threat, was trying to make contact with Rockhampton.

The Hudson with seven people on board flew into oblivion so completely that some described it as a "Bermuda triangle" experience.

Throughout the years, Defence Force staff training in the Shoalwater Bay area have wondered if they might stumble upon clues.

The Hudson left Lowood, near Ipswich, for Bowen at 8.30am with fine autumn weather expected up to Gladstone. However there were reports of storms along the Capricorn Coast.

The aircraft was sighted over Ban Ban Springs, Kalpowar and Emu Park. Minutes later the Hudson droned over Yeppoon and Rockhampton's control tower heard the plane's call sign: "Sugar Uncle Robert, please confirm position, Sugar Uncle Robert please confirm."

RAAF Air Control Clerk, Sgt Ron Moore, kept answering but realised the Hudson's radio must have been faulty as there was no response.

It was only 10am, but the sky was black with the storm closing in. Civil Defence tried to make contact on an old frequency but the weather and the Berserker Ranges produced a garbled transmission.

By JOHN SANDERSON

At 10.30am in the Byfield area north of Yeppoon, local fisherman Walter Palmer noticed a twin-tailed aircraft fly past a little out to sea. Its engine appeared to be rapidly rising then falling, consistent with engine failure.

Palmer and a timber worker named Hobbs saw it fly towards Akens Island off Shoalwater Bay and then disappear. An extensive air and sea search turned up no flotsam, no wreckage, no clues.

A Townsville board of inquiry was told that two brothers thought they heard the sound of crashing timber near Double Mountain in the Shoalwater Bay area, around 10.40am on the fateful day.

A further search found no clues and the seven men were officially listed as missing, presumed dead.

In 1962 there was an incident, possibly related, which still failed to remove flight "Sugar Uncle Robert" from the Bermuda Triangle of history.

An unidentified squatter at Dingo Beach, south of Clairview, reported to St Lawrence police that he had found human remains at the entrance to Clairview Creek.

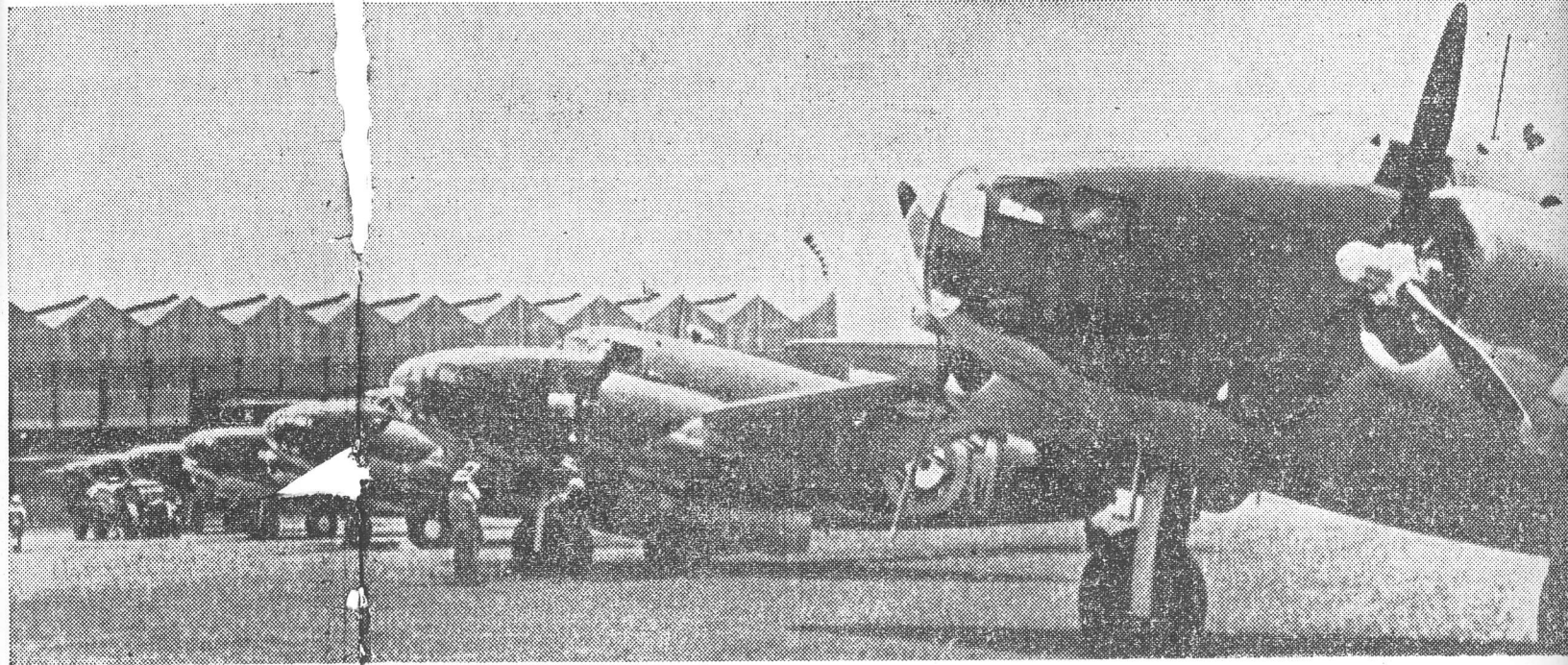
He produced a rusty old army forces identification tag and a rotting piece of cloth with some tattered black braid, identified as an RAAF officer's shoulder epaulette.

A policeman accompanied him back to the creek and found drag marks and the fresh tracks of a saltwater crocodile.

Marine creatures were conspiring to keep the secrets which have eluded the military for 51 years.

In 1964, two Yeppoon fishermen were trawling at dusk when they saw what appeared to be a silver, twin-tailed aircraft with two engines flying over Cape Clinton. What really distracted them was that no sound seemed to be coming from its engines.

Until someone stumbles over the wreckage, the fate of the Hudson and seven crew remains just another Queensland mystery.



Australian Air Force Units Now Serving In Malaya

ROYAL Air Force Headquarters, Far East, has stated that it is now able to announce that units of the Royal Australian Air Force equipped with modern fighter and bomber aircraft of outstanding performance are now stationed in Malaya and form an important part of the air forces in this country.

As a result of these powerful reinforcements, the defences of Malaya have been greatly strengthened.

The spirit of the men is excellent and they are already settling well to life in their new home.

Senior officials of the R.A.A.F. stated that both the pilots

have proved themselves to be of the highest class and confirm anew the high reputation they achieved in the last war.

They have a natural aptitude for fighting and possess the dash and spirit always associated with the term "Aussie."

This new addition to Malayan air strength has been made possible by the ambitious expansion programme decided on by the Australian Government some three years ago.

The heavy calls on the British aircraft industry resulting from the R.A.F. expansion programme at Home precluded any possibility of Australian orders for the best and most modern British aircraft being met without very considerable delay.

Orders In America

The Australian authorities decided, therefore, to purchase American aircraft rather than postpone or curtail their expansion programme.

Orders were placed for certain types of American aircraft, which have since become famous, and factories were established in Australia to build these types under licence.

The then revolutionary step of purchasing Service aircraft from non-British manufacturers met with a good deal of opposition, but the wisdom of the decision has been amply justified by the trend of world events and by the excellent quality of the aircraft supplied.

In fact, the Royal Air Force has been glad to follow the lead of the R.A.A.F. and to place large orders for American aircraft.

The expansion programme of the R.A.A.F. has proved to have been particularly well timed in that it reached fruition in time to answer

calls for air reinforcements from other parts of the Empire.

In terms of personnel the strength of the R.A.A.F. is nearly five times greater than it was 12 months ago. Nearly 33,000 men consisting of air crews and ground staff have been selected for service since the war began.

Plane Manufacture

Some 180 fully qualified fitters, flight technicians and riggers are graduating each week from the Australian Air Force Engineering School in which there are at present 2,324 trainees: While the monthly intake of pilots has reached 346.

So far as machines are concerned the number of military aircraft excluding training types in Australia has been doubled.

Some of these machines have been obtained from America while many have been built by Australian workmen in their own country.

To-day the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation is rapidly turning out modern military aeroplanes for the defence of Australia and other parts of the Empire.

From the time that this factory was ready it took only two years for the first machines to be given their test flights. This was almost a world record in production and the factory is now turning out aircraft at the rate of one per day. This rate of production will shortly be stepped up considerably and in addition plans are well advanced to produce, in Australia, the new twin-engine bomber aircraft—"Beaufort" Bomber.

The knowledge that such a considerable supply of pilots, ground crews and machines are available from our nearest Dominion neighbour will give the people of Malaya an increased confidence in this country's capacity to defend itself.

Australian airmen have already proved their worth in the battle of Britain and in the operations proceeding in the Middle East and their comrades in this country will worthily uphold the reputation which has already been won.

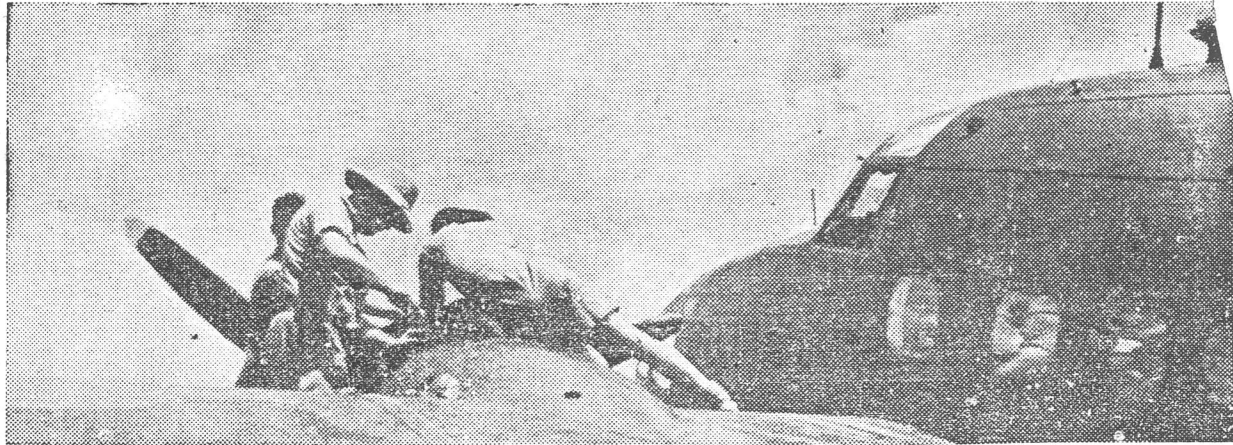
Both at work and at play, the Australian airmen will undoubtedly set a standard which will take a lot of beating, and it is likely that Rugby football enthusiasts will have a rare treat when the Aussies' fifteen get going on the Padang.



An Australian pilot returning from a reconnaissance flight.

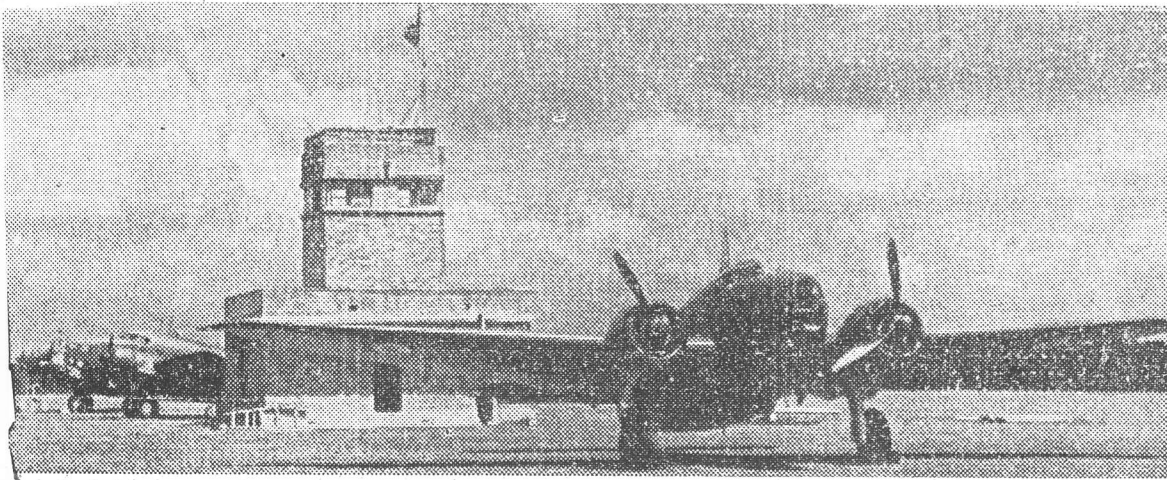


Group Captain Brownell (on the left) with two of his squadron commanders and administrative staff.

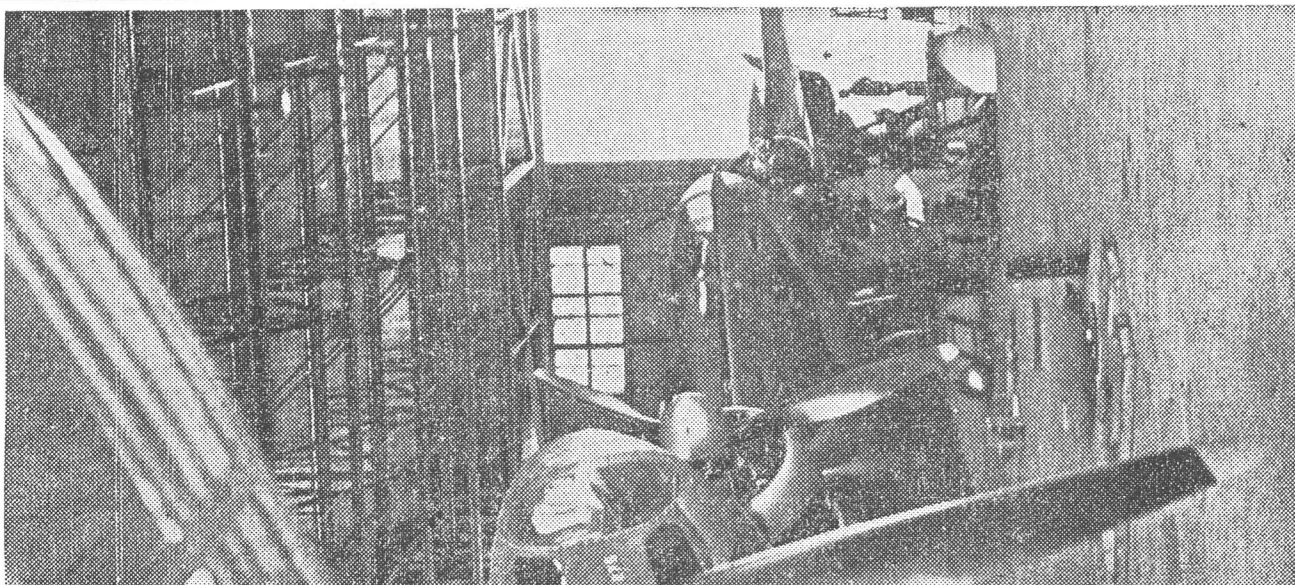


R.A.A.F. mechanics making a final adjustment.

Australian Air Force In Malaya



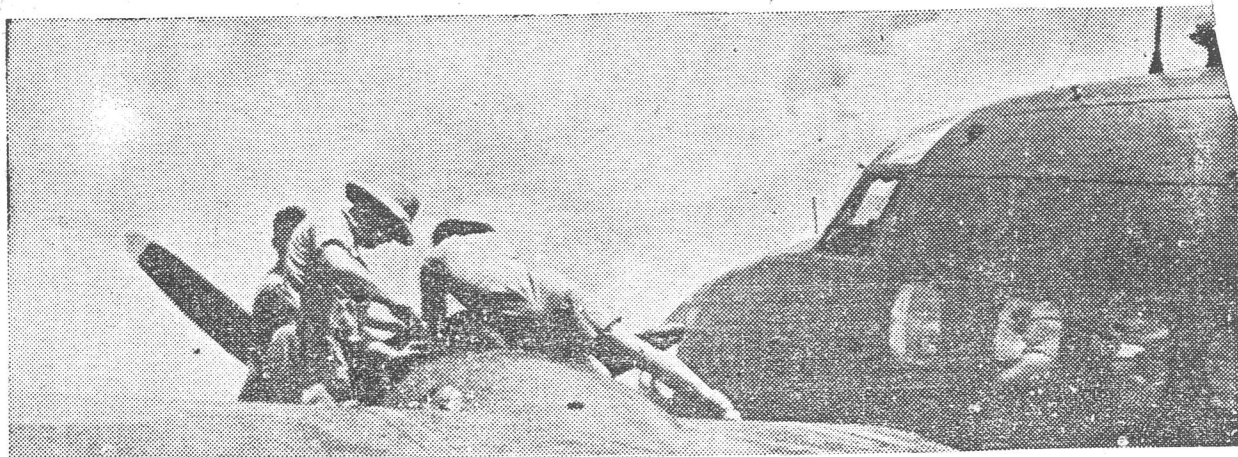
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the hangars at a Royal Australian Air Force station
(Above right) A line of bombers of the R.A.A.F.

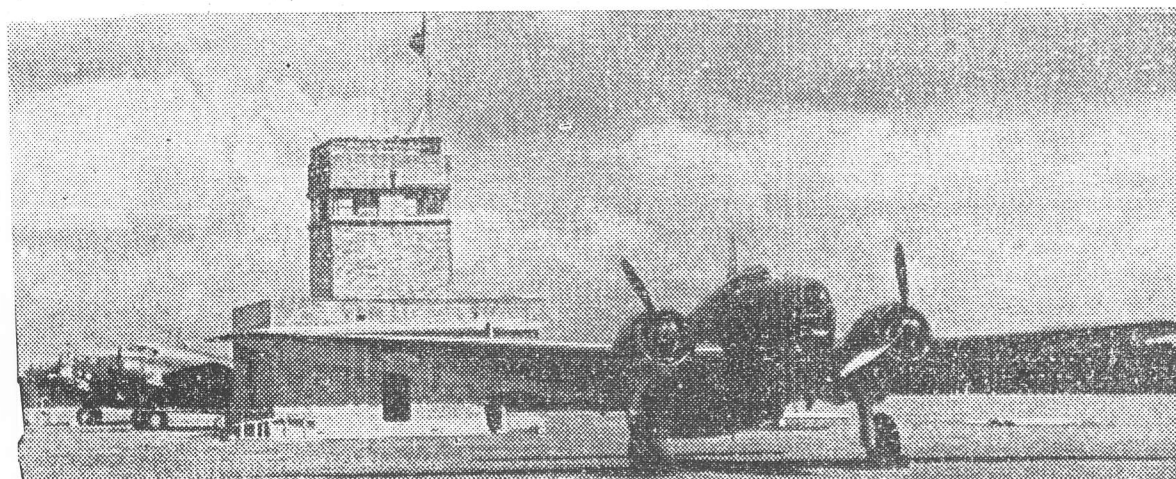


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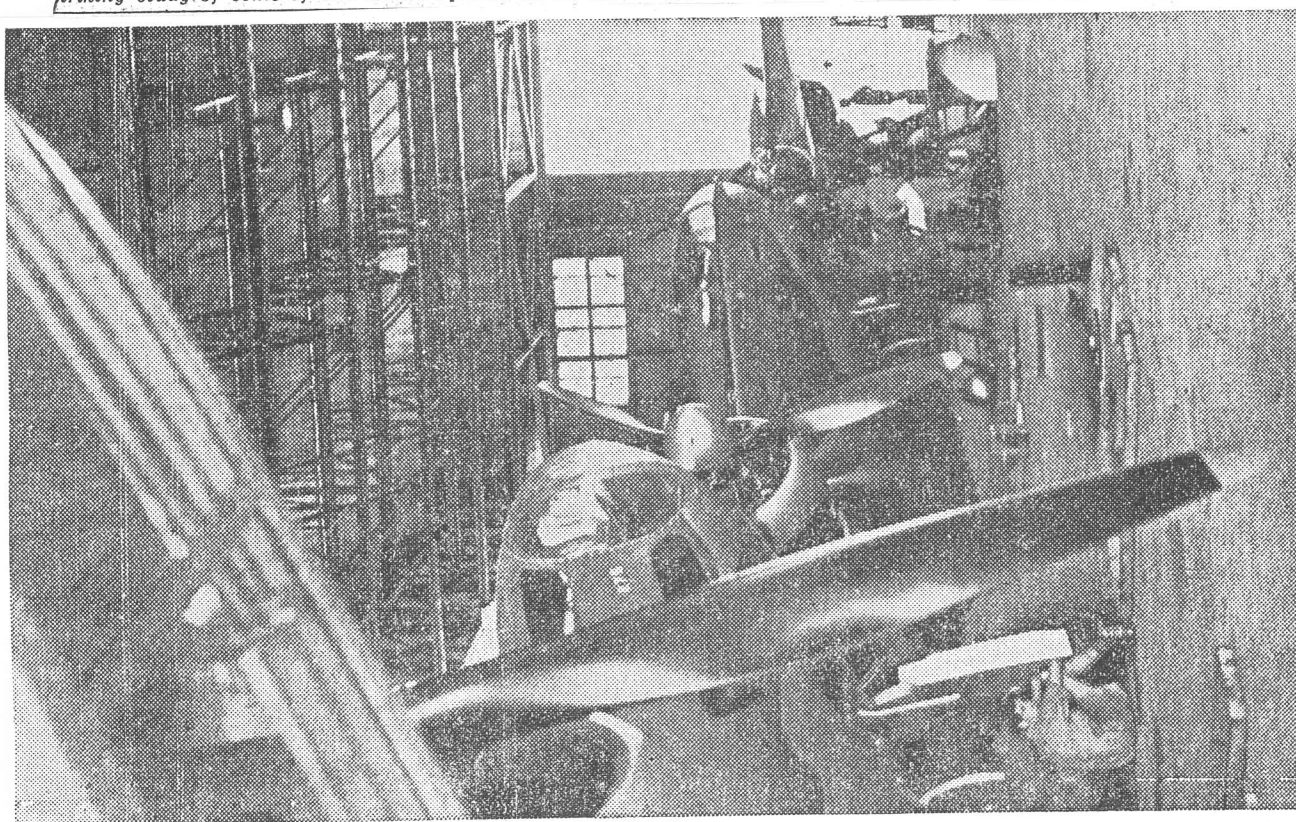


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A view of one of the hangars at a Royal Australian Air Force station in Malaya. (Above right) A line of bombers of the R.A.A.F.

STRONG R.A.A.F. SQUADRONS NOW IN MALAYA

MELBOURNE, Tuesday.

An undisclosed number of R.A.A.F. squadrons has been transferred to stations in British Malaya, including Singapore, the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) announced to-day.

The squadrons are described in a message from Singapore as "strong units" equipped with "powerful, modern, American and Australian fighter and bomber planes."

Mr. Menzies said the dispatch of R.A.A.F. units did not increase the British Air Strength in this area, in view of the departure of R.A.F. squadrons.

Nevertheless, it would be a matter for great satisfaction to the Australian people that by this means the R.A.A.F. was able to make a contribution to Britain's air strength by relieving R.A.F. squadrons for use elsewhere.

Australia also had a vital interest in the security of Singapore, he said.

Men And Machines Praised

From Our Special Representative and Australian Associated Press

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"As a result of these powerful reinforcements, the defences of this country are greatly strengthened.

"The spirit of the men is excellent and they are already settling down well to life in their new home.

"Senior officials of the R.A.F. stated that both pilots and crews had proved themselves to be of the highest class," the announcement continued, "and confirm anew the high reputation achieved in the last war.

"They have natural aptitude for flying and possess the dash and spirit always associated with the term 'Aussie'."

This is the first time an Australian force has been stationed in Malaya.

The presence of a large contingent in Singapore has been obvious during past weeks. However, until now, it has not been considered wise to announce their arrival.

The Australians are stationed in new aerodromes, completion of which was accelerated to take the powerful reinforcements.

They participated in a variety show staged by the combined services in aid of the Red Cross, introducing Singapore to "Waltzing Matilda."

Senior R.A.F. officers compliment the Australian Government on its far-sightedness in deciding on an ambitious expansion scheme three years ago, and point out that the R.A.F. has been glad to follow the lead of the R.A.A.F. in purchasing service aircraft from non-British manufacturers.

"The wisdom of this decision has been amply justified by the excellent quality of the aircraft," one said.

He added: "The knowledge that such a considerable supply of pilots, ground crews and machines is available from Australia gives the people of Malaya increased confidence in this country's capacity to defend itself.

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SYDNEY MORNING HERALD



1.10.40

THE WAR, DAY BY DAY.

R.A.A.F. at Singapore.

BY OUR MILITARY CORRESPONDENT.

The announcement that squadrons of the Royal Australian Air Force had reached Malaya to replace R.A.F. units sent elsewhere is an item of particular interest to this country, not only because it signifies a further extension of Australia's contribution to the Empire war effort, but also because it emphasises the nature of our own defence problem.

The presence of R.A.A.F. detachments at Malaya (which includes Singapore) is a tangible expression of the unquestionable truth that Australia's strategical frontier lies far beyond our shores. Singapore is our front-line bastion, in the most literal sense of that word, and it is a matter of immediate concern to us if the defences of that multiple base are strengthened.

When Singapore naval base was formally inaugurated in February, 1938, a centre of British naval influence was erected almost 6,000 miles east of Malta, and the south side of the straits of Johore came into the picture of world strategy. The inadequacy of Hong Kong as an anchorage and repair base for large vessels made some such base as Singapore absolutely necessary after the end of 1936, when the precluding terms of the Washington Treaty allowed new constructions.

But Singapore is far more than a naval base. The aerodrome at Seletar is also the headquarters of the R.A.F. in the Far East, and its torpedo-bombers and flying-boats can operate in a segment stretching as far south as Darwin and correspondingly outwards in all other directions. It is not usually realised what part the rulers of the native States have played in co-operating in the defence of British interests in the Eastern seas. As early as 1937, the Kuala Lumpur Council of the Federated Malay States unanimously presented to the British Government two squadrons of service aircraft for use in Malaya. A chain of new aerodromes was subsequently built in Malaya and along the coast of Sarawak and North Borneo, while the fortification of Penang was commenced in 1939. Since June of this year, bills for compulsory service in Malaya have combined with donations for fresh R.A.F. squadrons to strengthen the colony's defences.

It is a matter for congratulation that these R.A.F. squadrons should now be released for service wider afield, while replacing units from Australia, both of fighters and bombers, should correspondingly strengthen the British military position at the heart of British power in the East. Such action is entirely in keeping with Britain's preconceived strategy for these regions, since this envisaged having the facilities ready in Malaya and sending the troops, the ships and the warplanes if

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GOVERNOR'S TERM EXTENDED.
(British Official Wireless.)

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SYDNEY MORNING HERALD 2.10.40

R.A.A.F. IN MALAYA.

Reinforcements to be Sent.

MELBOURNE, Thursday.

R.A.A.F. squadrons in British Malaya will be maintained at full strength, the Minister for Air, Mr. Fadden, said to-day, replying to a question about reinforcements.

"As these squadrons have proceeded from Australia to replace R.A.F. units which have been transferred elsewhere," he said, "it is our responsibility to maintain their strength. Any deficiencies which may occur from time to time will be remedied by despatching more men or aircraft."

4-10-40

R.A.A.F. MEN IN FAR EAST.

Settled Down Already.

SINGAPORE SQUADRON

BY OUR AVIATION CORRESPONDENT.

The presence of the Royal Australian Air Force at Singapore was well known in the East before the "news" was officially released in Australia. Officers of the R.A.A.F. were introduced to United States journalists during their recent tour of the Malayan defences.

The assembly crew which worked on the R.A.A.F. machines at Richmond was also introduced to the American journalists at Singapore.

The personnel of the R.A.A.F. has settled down to its duties at Singapore very happily, and the officers and men get on well with the British troops stationed there. The party consists of well-trained pilots and a competent ground staff to keep the machines in the air.

The assignment of members of the R.A.A.F. to Singapore is the first move from the eastern end of the Empire line along which personnel and aircraft are "shuttled" from chosen bases to any desired point. This plan was devised several years before the war. Members of the Royal Air Force formerly stationed at Singapore have been moved farther westward along the line, and the Australians have moved in from the east to replace them.

For aircraft supplies and fuel this aerial defence line can be used from both the western and eastern terminals. Aircraft from Canada, the United States, and Australia can be flown in via Darwin, and from Britain, Canada, and the United States from the Mediterranean. A steady flow of trained men, all the time growing as the Empire Air Scheme gets under way, can also be sent in from both ends.

Timor Their Field



Hudson squadrons have been figuring largely in successful attacks on Japanese-occupied parts of Timor. Here are some typical men of one Hudson squadron: From left—Sergeant D. F. Ellis, Brisbane; Sergeant B. B. Daley, Murwillumbah; Pilot-Officer A. J. Prentice, New Angledool (New South Wales), Flying-Officer H. S. McDougall, Barraba (New South Wales), and Flying-Officer R. B. E. Barraclough, Sydney.

Department of Air Photograph.

QD PAPEL

Big Planes For Sale

SYDNEY: The Commonwealth Disposals Commission has 10 Lockheed Hudson planes for sale, according to an official announcement.

Since February last year the Commission has sold 430 different types of aircraft, mainly to farmers, and ex-members of the RAAF, who wanted the machines for commercial purposes.

Sales were also made to public bodies, including the Salvation Army, police, Flying Doctor Services, and Aero Clubs.

The two latter groups are being given machines at half their usual price.

BRISBANE PAPERS

LOCKHEED HUDSON PLANES FOR SALE

The Commonwealth Disposals Commission is calling tenders for the purchase of 10 Lockheed Hudson aircraft as and where they lie in southern States. The closing date is 2 p.m. on June 6.

The planes are two engined mid-wing bombers, which are readily adaptable to serve as air ambulances, passenger transports, or cargo carriers.

Intending purchasers should get in touch with the Brisbane regional manager (Mr. Withy).

BRISBANE PAPER

1946