

★ TEST FLIGHT ★



F./L. C. Meares, of Sydney, talks to his fitter, L.A.C. H. Smith, of Toowong, before taking a Mosquito bomber off on a test flight from Archerfield. This is one of the aircraft that is kept in running order in case needed again.

100 Mosquitoes In Flying Trim

BY OUR AVIATION WRITER

The R.A.A.F. has been accused of writing off numerous planes because of inactivity, but it has almost 100 highly-effective Mosquitoes at Archerfield.

These twin-engined bombers are in front-line condition, and once loaded with bombs and ammunition can take off at a few minutes' notice.

Their cannons and machine-guns remain in the nose and wings. All pilot and navigator aides are still at the call of the crew.

Apart from two belly landings, in which one of the aircraft was wrecked, the unit has an excellent record.

Both air crews and ground staff work long hours to keep these aircraft in the air.

The pilots doing the work are specially trained for test flying and can fly every type of aircraft in the R.A.A.F. today. One of them has logged almost 3,000 hours.

One of the pilots, F./L. T. H. S. Gibbons, flew Mosquitoes over Europe during the war.

Another, F./L. H. R. Baldwin, who flew Beaufighters in the Pacific theatre, finds it a little strange flying the fastest aircraft in the service.

He now reaches 400 m.p.h. when testing at Archerfield, whereas in 1937, shortly after he joined the R.A.A.F., he was working all out to get his old Hawker Demon to reach the 200 mark.

The officer commanding the unit is S./L. F. Stiller, who commanded a repair unit during the war.

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