

1943
NEW ZEALAND

AIR DEPARTMENT

(REPORT ON THE) FOR THE YEAR 1942-43

Presented in pursuance of Section 7 of the Air Department Act, 1937

REPORT BY THE HONOURABLE F. JONES, MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE AIR DEPARTMENT, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1943

MR. SPEAKER, —

I have the honour to present to Parliament the report of the Air Department for the year ended 31st March, 1943.

Because it is impracticable to publish detailed information on defence programmes during wartime, and also because of the shortage of paper, it has again been decided to reduce drastically the scope of the Department's report.

I desire to express to all concerned my appreciation of the efficient and energetic manner in which they have met the many problems and difficulties of this period.

REPORT BY THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1943

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on the Royal New Zealand Air Force for the year ended 31st March, 1943.

Personnel.—The year has been chiefly notable for the increase in the strength of the R.N.Z.A.F., which was over 100 per cent. greater than at 31st March, 1942. All commitments have been met, but this has resulted in a heavy drain on reserves of applicants.

Awards. The following table details the awards made to New Zealand air personnel from the outbreak of war to 31st March, 1943. Comparative figures are also given for 1941 and 1942:—

Awards.	31st March, 1941.	31st March, 1942.	31st March, 1943.
Victoria Cross .. .. .	..	1	1
Distinguished Service Order .. .. .	..	6	15
Military Cross .. .. .	..	..	1
Conspicuous Gallantry Medal .. .. .	..	..	1
Distinguished Flying Cross	62	115	213
Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross	2	7	20
Distinguished Flying Medal	5	33	78
Bar to Distinguished Flying Medal .. .. .	..	..	1
George Medal	3	3	3
Air Force Cross	8	19	27
Bar to Air Force Cross .. .. .	..	1	1
Croix de Guerre	1	1	1
Air Force Medal .. .. .	..	2	4
Order of Lenin .. .. .	..	..	1
Order of Crown of Yugoslavia .. .. .	..	..	2
Order of White Eagle of Yugoslavia .. .. .	..	..	1
	81	188	370

In addition, several honours have been conferred, and many have been mentioned in despatches.

Casualties.—(a) Overseas: Casualties to New Zealand personnel serving overseas from the outbreak of war to 31st March, 1943, total 2,001. The following table gives the classifications, with comparative figures for 1941 and 1942:—

Classification.	31st March, 1941.	31st March, 1942.	31st March, 1943.	Increase for Year.
Killed	156	529	1,206	677
Missing, believed killed	20	51	175	124
Missing	59	135	307	172
Prisoner of war or interned	50	132	287	155
Missing, believed prisoner of war .. .. .	..	6	26	20
	285	853	2,001	1,148

In addition, 66 have been reported seriously injured or ill and remain on the list at 31st March, 1943. The comparative total last year was 57.

(b) New Zealand: During the year there were thirty-eight fatal flying accidents, involving the loss of 76 lives. The following table gives the number of deaths amongst New Zealand air personnel since the outbreak of war to 31st March, 1943. Figures for 1941 and 1942 are also shown:—

Cause.	31st March, 1941.	31st March, 1942.	31st March, 1943.	Increase for Year.
Flying accidents	35	89	165*	76
Other aircraft accidents	2	4	4	..
Motor and other non-flying accidents	7	11	22†	11
Natural causes	5	7	21‡	14
	49	111	212	101

* Includes six missing.

† Two missing in alpine climb.

‡ Includes two W.A.A.F. members.

Training Organization.—(a) Flying Training: Various alterations have been made to the standard training syllabus, and although this alteration has created extra demands on instructors, both ground and flying, all commitments have been met.

Reports from overseas indicate that the standard of training of R.N.Z.A.F. personnel is very satisfactory and compares favourably with that received by pupils from other Dominions.

(b) Technical Training: Owing to the increased number of aircraft operating and to the formation of new squadrons over the past year, a rapid increase in the number of technical personnel has been necessary.

A heavy burden has been placed on the technical training schools and staffs, who have carried out their duties with keenness and enthusiasm. The result has been that training for the year has been maintained at a very high standard.

Educational Services.—This branch has continued to provide pre-entry training for aircrew and radio and other technical personnel, almost all the instruction being given in aerodrome defence squadrons. Entrance examinations for these groups and for corresponding groups in the Air Training Corps have been conducted regularly.

Correspondence courses for Air Training Corps Cadets unable to join squadrons or units have been continued. An important development has been the extension to Air Force personnel of the facilities of the Army Education and Welfare Service. This branch has now completed arrangements to use current affairs bulletins, study courses, and library facilities as developed in the Army scheme. This type of work will be covered on all New Zealand stations, and in addition two education officers have been posted to island stations for work of a general educational and recreational nature. The provision of educational facilities for discharged male and female personnel is also receiving attention.

Air Training Corps.—The Air Training Corps has expanded considerably and is now established in nearly every town in New Zealand. School units have been formed in most of the principal secondary schools. Cadets are showing great keenness in their work and are reaching a satisfactory standard of efficiency in their training.

Monthly drafts are now entering the R.N.Z.A.F. for aircrew and non-flying duties, and the value of the A.T.C. training is being proved by the progress ex-A.T.C. Cadets are making in flying and technical training.

The training of Cadets is divided into two main sections, (a) educational training and (b) Service training. Satisfactory progress has been made in the organization of classes for both these aspects of training. Cadet parades are held on two nights a week, one night being devoted to educational subjects and the second night to drill, physical training, Morse, first aid, aircraft recognition, engines, theory of flight, armament, and other Service subjects. These parades are supplemented by occasional week-end parades and by visits to Air Force stations.

Women's Auxiliary Air Force. During the year the strength of the W.A.A.F. was increased, although recruiting during the last quarter of 1942 dropped considerably owing to the enforced registration of women under the National Service Regulations and the subsequent drafting of large numbers into essential industries. The newly-formed W.A.A.C. and W.R.N.S. also attracted a great many women who would otherwise have volunteered for service in the W.A.A.F.

Training courses have been held during the year and have been very successful. A small draft was trained overseas, and reports indicate that they are carrying out their work and standing up to the changed conditions very well indeed.

Medical Branch. The large expansion in R.N.Z.A.F. personnel has involved heavy burdens on the Medical Branch, but the general health of air personnel has been maintained at a high standard.

Dental Service. Full dental treatment is rendered to all members of the R.N.Z.A.F., to full-time members of the Air Training Corps, and to members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. All such personnel are dentally examined on entry and any necessary treatment carried out promptly so that all ranks are rendered dentally fit as soon as possible after entry. Regular re-examinations and treatments are also carried out to ensure that this fitness is maintained.

Operations. (a) *New Zealand:* The past year has seen the formation of many new squadrons in New Zealand for the defence of the Dominion against invasion and raiding activities and for the protection of shipping. By carrying out patrols and searches to seaward from the New Zealand coasts, bomber reconnaissance squadrons continue to play an unspectacular but important part in the defence of the Dominion. These patrols, somewhat dull and tedious and yielding little of the satisfaction that comes from contact with the enemy, are yet recognized as essential by the squadron personnel as valuable training for the more active operations in which they may later be engaged in forward areas.

(b) *Pacific Area:* New Zealand bomber and fighter squadrons have been sent to many parts of the Pacific, and to-day New Zealanders are serving actively in increasing strength along the South Pacific battle front, the key to the Dominion's security. These New Zealand squadrons have been engaged on the important work of patrolling sea routes and providing anti-submarine patrol to vessels arriving and departing at the various ports, but during the latter part of the year our airmen have been engaged in active operations against the Japanese in the Solomons, where their work has met with most favourable comment from the Allied Commanders in that area.

Works and Buildings.—A large programme of work has been carried out during the year, both in construction and extension of aerodromes and also in the erection of accommodation and technical facilities. The maintenance of buildings and aerodromes was taken over from the Public Works Department, many of the personnel formerly employed by that Department being enlisted into the R.N.Z.A.F. for this work. Nos. 1 and 2 Aerodrome Construction Squadrons have now returned to New Zealand after carrying out construction programmes overseas.

Aircraft and Equipment.—(a) *Equipment:* The formation of additional operational units, the increased number of aircraft in service, and the expansion in personnel strength have necessitated large increases in all classes of equipment, both from overseas and local sources.

(b) *Unit Changes:* A number of new units have been formed and equipped, and new stores depots have been established to provide for the increased quantities of equipment received.

(c) *General Supply Position:* The incorporation of the R.N.Z.A.F. within the command of the Commanding Officer, South Pacific Area, has resulted in certain changes in the channel of supply. In general, supplies have been satisfactorily maintained.

(d) *Inspectorate of Equipment:* During the year an Inspectorate of Equipment was formed to further ensure that all equipment is maintained at an efficient standard and that correct stores administration procedure is followed.

Maintenance.—The formation of new units, combined with the marked increase in flying hours at both training and operational units, has greatly increased the work of the Maintenance Branch. A centralized maintenance scheme now covers all units, and new repair depots have been established. Small numbers of personnel have undergone overseas specialist courses, which have proved of inestimable value in carrying out maintenance work in this country. Assistance has also been given to the United States Forces by the overhaul of engines in R.N.Z.A.F. repair depots.

Aeronautical Production.—A substantial increase in local production has been effected and has materially helped to overcome shortages of certain spare parts for airframes and engines. During the year an extended scheme for the reclamation and salvage of repairable equipment has been put into operation. It is desired to record the co-operation received from local manufacturers, which has again been of the greatest assistance to the Service.

Signals. *Communications:* The organization and scope of the R.N.Z.A.F. have been expanded to provide point-to-point and ground-to-air communication for operational requirements, both in the Dominion and in forward areas. Wireless communication with Air Ministry and Air Force Headquarters, Canada, Middle East, and India has been constantly maintained, and a large increase in the amount of traffic on these channels has been successfully handled. The control of certain civil aeradio stations has been taken over by the R.N.Z.A.F. and the operating personnel enlisted.

Radio Navigational Aids: Standard beam approach installations have been made at certain strategic R.N.Z.A.F. aerodromes to assist aircraft in approaching and landing under adverse weather conditions. Radio direction-finding stations have also been erected to meet the needs of the large increase in operational flying.

Radio Location: An air warning radio location system has been established.

Meteorological.—The Meteorological Branch of the R.N.Z.A.F. is responsible for all meteorological requirements of the three armed Services and of the civil population. With the exception of three radio operators seconded from the Post and Telegraph Department and a few female assistants, the

staff is composed of Service personnel. A twenty-four-hourly forecasting service is maintained, which provides, in addition to Service requirements, most of the forecasting for internal commercial aviation and trans-ocean flying.

Increased overseas commitments in this field, as well as local extensions, have necessitated a substantial increase in staff. Several courses have been conducted to train airmen and W.A.A.F. meteorological observers and to prepare them for trade tests. Their progress has been very satisfactory. Whenever possible, W.A.A.F. observers have been used to replace airmen observers.

Band of the R.N.Z.A.F.—A heavy programme has been carried out by the Band of the Royal New Zealand Air Force during the period under review, although, as a result of transfers to aircrew, technical trades, and other Services, the personnel of the Band has undergone many changes. Despite these difficulties, however, a high standard of performance has been maintained. In addition to its Service duties, the Band has been instrumental in raising very large sums for patriotic purposes.

Conclusion.—I desire to thank all members of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and the civilian staff for their efforts during the past year. The success of our expansion schemes has been largely due to their enthusiasm and unremitting toil during a period which has imposed a heavy strain on all.

I have, &c.,

L. M. ISITT, Air Vice-Marshal,
Chief of the Air Staff.

REPORT OF THE ACTING CONTROLLER OF CIVIL AVIATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1943

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

DESPITE the difficulties encountered through the release of equipment and trained personnel to the fighting Services, civil aviation has provided a most valuable method of transporting essential passengers, mail, and freight between the main centres of the Dominion and also to Australia.

Throughout the United Nations, plans are already being developed for post-war aviation, which almost certainly will play an ever-increasing part in world transport. Both by reason of its geographical position and the advances it has already made in air travel, the Dominion will be considerably affected by these measures, and much importance is therefore attached to the proposals at present being formulated for consideration by Government which are intended to ensure that the needs of the Dominion will be adequately provided and safeguarded.

Commercial Aircraft Services.—Six internal scheduled aircraft services operated throughout the year, with a total route mileage of 1,318. The following table shows the main statistics in comparison with the previous two war years:—

	1942-43.	1941-42.	1940-41.
Passengers	30,634	39,058	37,023
Mail (lb.)	220,527	165,670	130,806
Freight (lb.)	174,757	194,858	206,936
Miles flown	667,953	688,723	645,702

International Aircraft Services.—The only international service operated during the year was the Auckland-Sydney service by Tasman Empire Airways, Ltd. Traffic on this service is summarized in the following table, figures for the previous year being shown in parentheses:—

Passengers.	Mail.	Freight.
2,256 (1,959)	101,741 (167,275) lb.	35,195 (32,230) lb.

The drop in mail and freight figures is due to two main factors: (a) the cessation of the Pan-American Airways Pacific service, and (b) the suspension of the Empire service from Darwin to Cairo.

Conclusion.—I desire to record my appreciation of the excellent work done by members of the staff during the year.

I have, &c.,

J. M. BUCKERIDGE, Flight Lieutenant,
Acting Controller of Civil Aviation.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (628 copies), £7 10s.

By Authority: E. V. PAUL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1943

Price 3d.]