

By 31st March, 1946, the R.N.Z.A.F. had been reduced to a skeleton basis. The operational organization consists of four units—a fighter squadron for Japan equipped with Corsairs; a bomber and a fighter unit at Ohakea with Venturas and Corsairs respectively; and a flying-boat unit at Lauthala Bay, Fiji. The latter three units were maintained on a nucleus basis. In addition, the elements of a training organization were retained at Wigram Aerodrome, and an Instrument Flying School at Whenuapai.

ORGANIZATION

The organization of the R.N.Z.A.F. in the South Pacific had been designed to maintain a practically self-contained Force of twenty squadrons operating under United States command. United States advances elsewhere in the Pacific made it impracticable to continue the employment of this Force, and a number of operational and ancillary units were disbanded early in 1945. These included the disbandment of three bomber reconnaissance squadrons, one fighter squadron, and one flying-boat squadron, two B.R. operational training units, the gunnery training schools, fighter leaders' school, and a servicing unit. In addition, the following stations were closed: Taieri, Harewood, New Plymouth, Swanson, Central Flying School at Woodbourne, Nelson, Convalescent Depot, Rotorua.

During this period also responsibility for the administration of R.N.Z.A.F. units in the Pacific was divided between Air Department and New Zealand Air Task Force, thus enabling the disbandment of No. 1 (Islands) Group.

While the overall policy provided for a steady reduction in activities throughout the R.N.Z.A.F. during this first phase, it was necessary to form a few small units in New Zealand to meet certain specific requirements. These included a Technical Training Pool for Wireless Operators, Hobsonville Maintenance Wing, a Transport Operational Training Unit, and a Fighter Pilots' Pool.

After August, 1945, the organization was reoriented to ensure the rapid demobilization of personnel and to meet commitments peculiar to the immediate post-war period. The first step was the disbandment of four more fighter squadrons, followed shortly afterwards by a further four. Its mission completed, the New Zealand Air Task Force was disbanded on 31st October, 1945, and in its place a small administrative headquarters, known as Islands Group, was set up in Fiji. This was necessary to administer and ensure the welfare of those personnel left behind at various Pacific bases engaged in the guarding and disposal of equipment. The disbandment of field headquarters at Bougainville, Guadalcanal, Jacquinot Bay, Los Negros, Emirau, and Green Island was effected, and finally the evacuation of disposal parties from these bases enabled the disbandment of Islands Group on 1st March, 1946.

In New Zealand the following units were disbanded in succession: No. 1 Transport Operational Training Unit, Marine Training School, R.N.Z.A.F. Band, Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7 Radar Units, Aircrew Pool, Non-effective Pools, Corsair Assembly Unit, and ten servicing units.

In order to consolidate commitments and thus reduce overhead in administrative personnel, the following transfers of activities to permanent stations were effected, and the original stations closed: Services W/T Station from Waiouru to Ohakea, Engineering and General Repair Unit and Aircraft Repair Unit from Hamilton to Ohakea, Technical Training School from Nelson to Hobsonville, Armament School from Woodbourne to Hobsonville, and Central Fighter Establishment from Ardmore to Ohakea.

In addition to the above, Remuera was transferred to Mechanics Bay, and Anderson Park to Shelly Bay, to facilitate civilian housing problems. Waipapakauri and Norfolk were reduced to a nucleus basis and placed under the administration of Whenuapai.