

DEMobilIZATION

Plans for the dis-establishment of Pacific units were put into operation immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, and arrangements made to carry out large-scale repatriation by air and sea. The s.s. "Wahine" made three trips from New Zealand to Bougainville in rapid succession and repatriated a total of 1,716 personnel. The remainder of the personnel were returned by specially augmented R.N.Z.A.F. air transport services.

In addition, large drafts of aircrew personnel were arriving from England and the India-Burma theatre.

To carry out the processes of release in New Zealand, three Non-effective Pools were set up—one each in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch—with a capacity to release eighty to one hundred personnel per day each. These pools arranged final medical and x-ray action, made pay advances and mufiti grants, advised personnel on their rehabilitation prospects, issued travel warrants and final discharge papers. In addition to the release of ex-overseas personnel, the pools also handled large numbers of personnel from New Zealand units in those cases where speedier medical and other facilities could be obtained at the pools in preference to local stations. Between VJ Day and the end of March, 1946, 26,928 personnel were released from the Air Force.

In January, 1946, large-scale demobilization had ceased, and the Non-effective Pool organization was reduced in size to cope only with the small volume of overseas traffic from the United Kingdom and India-Burma theatres. The slowing-down of the demobilization rate had enabled units to carry out their own releases effectively.

The following is a summary of releases effected between VJ Day and the end of March, 1946:—

Month ending	Males.	Females.	Total.
31st August	1,203	156	1,359
30th September	6,791	661	7,452
31st October	3,073	318	3,391
30th November	4,436	287	4,723
31st December	3,052	97	3,149
31st January	2,163	99	2,262
28th February	2,856	107	2,963
31st March	1,557	72	1,629
	25,131	1,797	26,928

Of the above, 7,206 personnel were officers and aircrew, mainly from United Kingdom and India-Burma, whilst the balance were ground staff mainly from Pacific and New Zealand units.

Personnel have been released in accordance with a uniform system of priorities throughout the services which cannot give special consideration to the value of individuals to the Air Force. Consequently the loss of key personnel must be accepted even to the embarrassment of the Service in respect of its residual flying commitments.

A programme of enlistment into the Interim Air Force was approved early in 1946, and two recruit depots were set up. The first intakes commenced in March, 1946.

AWARDS

Details of awards to New Zealand air personnel granted annually during the period 1st April, 1940, to 31st March, 1946, are shown at Appendix B of this report.