

aircrew personnel a year. A total of 13,158 trained and semi-trained aircrew were passed through New Zealand schools, the bulk of whom were despatched to the United Kingdom and Canada for service with the Royal Air Force. The scheme necessitated the retention within New Zealand of approximately 10,000 trained airmen for this purpose alone up to the end of 1944, and represented the major contribution of the R.N.Z.A.F. to the war. It demonstrated the suitability of a high proportion of young New Zealanders by virtue of education, and physique and temperament, for aircrew training. The record of the R.N.Z.A.F. in terms of trained aircrew personnel in proportion to the population was the highest in the British Commonwealth, and their achievements, primarily in the European theatre, were outstanding. It was not possible, however, owing to man-power difficulties which developed after 1943, to send any ground personnel to the United Kingdom.

On the outbreak of war the New Zealand Bomber Squadron, equipped with Wellington aircraft, was forming in England and on the point of flying out to New Zealand. It was handed over to the R.A.F., and as No. 75 (N.Z.) Bomber Squadron it earned a fine reputation in Bomber Command, producing the first R.N.Z.A.F. V.C., the late Sergeant Pilot J. A. Ward. As the numbers of New Zealand aircrew serving with the R.A.F. increased, R.N.Z.A.F. squadrons manned by R.A.F. ground personnel were formed as a token of the contribution made by New Zealand. Provision was made for six such squadrons, which were formed on the dates and for the roles set out below:—

- (i) *No. 485*: Formed 1st March, 1941, as a fighter squadron equipped with Spitfires, and took part in the defence of Britain with an excellent record.
- (ii) *No. 486*: Formed 3rd March, 1942, as a fighter squadron equipped with Hurricanes, and also took part in the defence of Britain with distinction. Was later re-equipped with Typhoons, and subsequently Tempests, and formed part of the occupational air Forces in Germany.
- (iii) *No. 487*: Formed in August, 1942, as a medium bomber squadron equipped with Venturas, and later with Mosquitoes. Squadron Leader Trent earned his V.C. whilst serving in this squadron, which also formed part of the occupational Forces in Germany.
- (iv) *No. 488*: Formed in Malaya on 11th October, 1941, as a fighter squadron equipped with Buffaloes. Disbanded in March, 1942, and re-formed in England 25th June as a night fighter squadron with Beaufighters, operating with success against German night raiders.
- (v) *No. 489*: Formed 12th December, 1941, as a torpedo bomber squadron equipped with Beauforts, Hampdens, Beaufighters, and later with Mosquitoes. In common with other Coastal Command units, this squadron was employed against enemy shipping.
- (vi) *No. 490*: Formed in December, 1942, as a flying-boat squadron equipped with Catalinas, and later with Sunderlands. Shortly after its formation, No. 490 Squadron was transferred to West Africa, whence it was employed on long-range reconnaissance.

During operations against a U-boat by this squadron, an aircraft from No. 200 (R.A.F.) Squadron was directed to render assistance. The pilot of this aircraft was the late Flying Officer Trigg, R.N.Z.A.F., who sighted another U-boat, which he attacked and sank, the action, unfortunately, costing him his life, but earning him the Victoria Cross.

All the above units, with the exception of No. 75 Squadron (in New Zealand) have since been disbanded. It may be noted that these squadrons employed less than 10 per cent. of the total R.N.Z.A.F. aircrew personnel serving with the R.A.F.