

tradesmen provide the only solution to these problems. The strength of the Air Force at 31st March, 1949, was 398 officers, 2,428 airmen, and 223 airwomen, a total of 3,049, of which total over 600 were non-effective undergoing training. The increase over last year's total is 202.

With the accent being placed on training and the necessity to concentrate training activities on certain stations to effect economies in equipment and administrative support, the accommodation problems at Wigram and Hobsonville have become acute. Although certain of the present accommodation assets of the Service are not being fully used, it is because they are situated at locations which cannot be effectively utilized until the trained element of the R.N.Z.A.F. is considerably augmented. While the R.N.Z.A.F. cannot expect a permanent rebuilding programme in the immediate future, at least additional training and domestic accommodation must be provided at the two major training stations as soon as possible.

The commitments of the R.N.Z.A.F. during the year included the segregation, custody, and disposal of equipment in conjunction with the War Assets Realization Board; the operation of overseas air transport schedules to Japan and Singapore (No. 41 Squadron); the maintenance of No. 14 Squadron in Japan as the New Zealand Air Component of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force until its withdrawal to New Zealand at the end of 1948; the maintenance of No. 5 Flying-boat Squadron on a skeleton basis in Fiji; and the operation of No. 75 Squadron equipped with Mosquitos at Ohakea. The last 11 Mosquitos were flight delivered to New Zealand during the year, making the total number received 76. Flying training at Wigram and trade training at Wigram and Hobsonville were intensified and extended.

A rearming programme is being formulated, and the replacement of interim operational and training aircraft with modern types in use in the Royal Air Force should commence in 1950.

During the year close liaison was maintained with the Royal Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force. Demonstrations and lectures by specialist teams from the R.A.F. and R.A.A.F. proved invaluable in providing the R.N.Z.A.F. with first-hand information on modern doctrine and developments in air warfare.

In March, 1949, the Chief of the Air Staff visited Australia to discuss aircraft-production and joint planning with the Royal Australian Air Force.

OPERATIONS

Squadron Activities.—No. 14 Squadron continued to represent the R.N.Z.A.F. as the New Zealand Air Component of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. The squadron ceased operational flying in Japan on the 1st September, 1948, and officially handed over the administration of the British Commonwealth Air Station at Bofu, which had been the responsibility of the squadron for nine months, to the United States Air Force. Prior to the squadron's embarkation from Iwakuni the Commander-in-Chief, B.C.O.F., Lieutenant-General H. C. H. Robertson, C.B.E., D.S.O., paid a fine tribute to its work and efficiency. Following its return to New Zealand in December, 1948, the squadron was re-formed at Ohakea. The ferrying of Mosquito aircraft from the United Kingdom by No. 75 Squadron was completed in May, 1948, when the seventy-sixth aircraft arrived in New Zealand. Since that date the activities of No. 75 Squadron have been focused on training in all phases of fighter-bomber operations. Equipped with Catalina flying-boats and based at Lauthala Bay, Fiji, No. 5 Squadron continued to provide search-and-rescue facilities in Fiji and operate a two-aircraft detachment at Hobsonville for similar duty. Numerous flights to islands in the Lau and Fiji Groups were made at the request of the United Kingdom High Commissioner for the Western Pacific in addition to the squadron training programme, which included flights between New