

for the Western Pacific. A detachment of two aircraft and crews has been maintained at Hobsonville for search and rescue duties. This flight has carried out several "mercy" missions to the Chatham Islands.

No. 41 Squadron, equipped with eleven Dakotas and two Avenger aircraft, has been employed on the following—replacement crew training, overseas schedules, search and rescue, aerial top-dressing, and flying displays.

No. 42 Squadron, equipped with two Devons, three Dominics, five Harvards, and four Austers, has been extensively occupied throughout the year with communications commitments. The Austers have carried out the usual forestry-patrol duties at Rotorua during the fire season. Meteorological flights have been regularly carried out, using Harvard aircraft.

No. 75 Squadron, which is now equipped with nine Mosquito aircraft and thirteen crews, has throughout the period under review concentrated on crew training and armament practice. The squadron has been called on many times to assist in search and rescue operations. A satisfactory standard of operating efficiency has been attained, and flights to both the Chatham Islands and the Kermadec Islands have been made as routine navigational training.

LIAISON VISITS

In June, 1949, the Chief of the Air Staff visited England to attend "air exercises" and to discuss with Air Ministry the re-equipment of the R.N.Z.A.F.

In December, 1949, representatives of the Royal Pakistan Air Force made a tour of Royal New Zealand Air Force stations and establishments as guests of the New Zealand Government.

During the period under review five York and three Lancastrian aircraft of No. 24 Commonwealth Transport Squadron, R.A.F., visited R.N.Z.A.F. stations on training flights.

STATISTICS

A summary of flying-times for all units is given in Appendix A. The total of 24,763 hours shows an increase over the hours flown in the preceding period (19,709 hours). During this period the amount of flying training has been double that carried out in the preceding year. Flying is still restricted owing to the lack of flying-hours due to maintenance difficulties within the Service.

3. MISCELLANEOUS FLYING ACTIVITIES

A communications flight, equipped with Auster aircraft, has been maintained at Rongotai for the purpose of facilitating visits to stations by Air Department officers, for flying practice, for search and rescue activities, and for training for Army A.O.P. pilots.

Search and rescue operations co-ordinated by the Air Traffic Control Division of Civil Aviation have been carried out during the year. The R.N.Z.A.F. provided aircraft on twelve occasions in searches for missing launches, dinghies, trampers, Civil aircraft, and distressed merchant shipping.

During the past year further aerial top-dressing experiments were carried out using Avenger aircraft. The programme "Top-dressed Three" was completed with these aircraft in the Masterton area. An Aerovan is being prepared for use on a magnetic survey in co-operation with the Dominion Physical Laboratory.