

# No. 31 Beaufighter Squadron

## ALBUM

# RAAF



## FORWARD

I am sure this collection of photographs and stories about No. 31 Squadron will bring back many memories to former members. There will be happy memories, but also sad memories; after all, Australia was at war and No. 31 Squadron had its share of casualties.

In September, 1942, I had the honour of becoming the first commanding Officer when the Squadron was formed at Forest Hill, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. and moved forward to the Darwin area. In those days our country was in grave danger and everything was being done in great haste. Airmen and aircrew had to be trained rapidly to maintain and fly what was virtually a new aircraft to the R.A.A.F. Many difficulties had to be overcome to prepare the unit for war. The Beaufighter was not the easiest aircraft to fly and in particular, it had some tricky characteristics on take off.

I have many memories of those formative weeks at Forest Hill and the first year of the Squadron's operations from Coomalie Creek. I remember the aircraft that became lost at night over a Victorian town in the early days of training. Beaufighter compasses were notoriously inaccurate, particularly after cannon firing and this aircraft was undoubtedly saved by an unknown civil engineer who had the initiative to flash the town's lights in morse, thus enabling the crew to locate themselves and return safely to base.

The Squadron's first operation and first contact with the enemy ended in tragedy when S/Ldr D. Riding and his navigator W/O R.D. Clarke were lost. By an extraordinary coincidence, (I was on another mission), I had the unhappy experience of witnessing this event. It was a sad beginning to the Squadron's operational record.

The Squadron, however, went on to undertake many successful operations against the Japanese. The Beaufighter became known to the enemy as the 'Whispering Death' as a result of its ability to approach targets with the minimum of noise. Operations being undertaken were fraught with danger as the aircraft had always to be flown at treetop level to avoid detection.

Aircraft had to be maintained in difficult tropical conditions, and it was only the dedication and tireless work of the ground crew, both domestic and technical, that enabled the Squadron to regularly produce on line, the maximum number of serviceable aircraft for its daily operations.

Towards the end of the war, I had the honour once again to be associated with No.31 Squadron when three Beaufighter Squadrons were combined to form No.77 (Attack) Wing. Of all my near forty years in the R.A.A.F. I have no hesitation in declaring that my posting to No.31 Squadron was without doubt the highlight of my service career, and I would like to pay tribute to all those who served with me in the Squadron. In my later years with the R.A.A.F. I was always concerned that it had not been possible to maintain the Squadron number in the R.A.A.F. order of battle. (No doubt with a change of motto!).

I would like to commend this album of memorabilia to all ex-members of the No.31 Squadron, and to all those who may have an interest in the wartime history of the R.A.A.F. In particular, it may help us to remember those who served with the Squadron and gave their lives for their country.

Air Marshall (Rtd.) Sir Charles Read  
K.B.M., C.B., D.F.C., A.F.C.

## **IN THE PREFACE TO THE SAME BOOK**

Conditions facing the RAAF crews in the SWPA were very different to those being experienced in Europe. These conditions placed high demands on the individual resourcefulness of airmen and ground crews. Most of the land area was covered with jungle and there were thousands of islands scattered over an area nearly twice as large as Europe. Crews shot down could not expect aid from any underground organization such as the Resistance supplied to airmen in France, Holland and Belgium. The Japanese were not signatories to the Geneva Convention. Captivity was to be avoided, since the Japanese were ruthless and cruel in their treatment of prisoners.

Of approximately 650 aircrew that flew Beaufighters during the war period, two were captured (one survived), four managed to escape, thirty nine were shot down by ground fire, thirty one went missing in action, nineteen were lost during operations, cause unknown, and a further fifty were killed as a result of flying accidents. A total of 165 aircrew were killed in Beaufighters during their fifteen years in service.

Not only were operational conditions different, but so too were the off duty conditions. 31 Squadron, while based at Coomalie, south of Darwin, was 2,700 kilometres from Adelaide, the nearest capital city. there were no Tivoli, Palladium or Windmill Theatres in the vicinity to provide entertainment. The Salvation Army had a truck touring the local bases, playing records over the public address systems. There were movies about twice a week in rudimentary outdoor Theatres and occasional live artist shows arranged by local personnel with singers, ventriloquists and so on. At a later period, film and recording artists toured the bases. Off duty crews played cards, went fishing and pig shooting. Each man received two bottles of beer per week (sometimes). The men lived in tents, (two or four to a tent), dispersed around the camp area. During the wet season (November to April) tropical rainstorms were a daily occurrence. Centipedes, scorpions, mosquitoes and possums and the occasional snake added to the general discomfort. A tour of duty for aircrew lasted nine months on the average, and for ground crew, fifteen to eighteen months.



## **31 Squadron**

### **Royal Air Force**

"This squadron was formed in the second year of the Great War. The squadron was sent to India for duties on the North West Frontier against rebellious native tribesmen. It continued in the role with BE2C aircraft, Bristol Fighters, Westland Wapiti aircraft until the late 1930's, when it re-equipped with Vickers Valentias in 1939 and became a Transport Squadron.

When WW2 began it saw active service in Iraq and in the Western Desert, prior to the Japanese entry into the war. It then served in India and Burma throughout the remainder of WW2, supplying ground troops with vital war supplies that helped to defeat the Japanese Empire, flying Douglas Dakota aircraft.

Immediately after the end of the war, the squadron flew actively in Java against the Indonesian rebels, before it was sent back to India.

Disbanded in 1947, it was reformed at Hendon in England the following year, the first time it had flown in England since its formation days in 1915.

Following seven years at Hendon as a communication squadron, it was disbanded again briefly before becoming part of RAF Germany as part 2nd TAF. Flying Canberra's, later Phantoms and today (1980) the Sepecat Jaguar GR1, it continues its service to Britain Royal Air Force, a service it has dutifully carried out almost non-stop since 1915."

The foregoing was written by Norman Franks, editor of the 31 Squadron history in a publication called *First in the Indian Skies*, which is the English translation of the squadron motto: IN CALEUM INDICUM PRIMUS, which appears on their crest and colours.

The squadron is still serving in Bruggen, Germany, flying Tornado's and was the first RAF Squadron to operate in the Gulf War.

Our thanks are due to Mr. S.P.Tsicalas for the loan of their Squadron History.

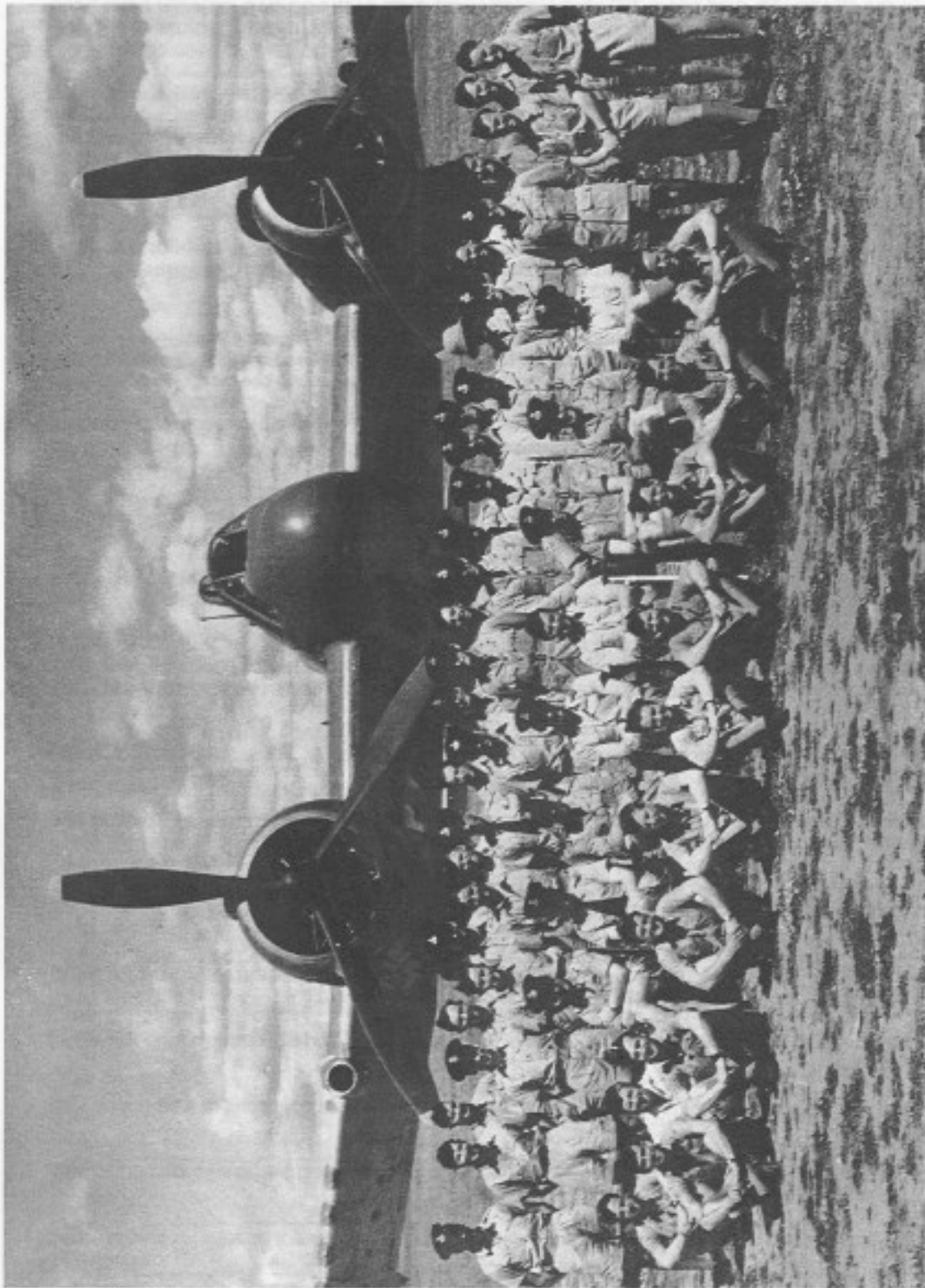


Photo: K. Spencer

31 SQUADRON FORESTHILLS WAGGA WAGGA OCTOBER 1942

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In compiling this album of our Squadron activities, I hope it brings back memories of our time in the Squadron.

I wish to thank the members who have forwarded photographs and written material to be incorporated in the album. To date some 260 photographs and most of the written material have been used and I still have some 200 photographs which I could not incorporate, mostly because of duplication and lack of information, and to use everything would have made it too large and too costly.

I specially thank those who carried cameras in their knapsacks instead of batons. Cameras are much more useful, particularly if threatened by King's Regulations and Standing Instructions, Daily Routine Orders and any other threat of sudden death and dire treatment, put out by our Headquarters and Orderly Room Staff if caught. With only batons we would not have an album to look back on and we would not have been able to answer our children's and grandchildren's question 'What did you do in the war Daddy?'

Preparation of this album required a lot of information also from other sources and our Squadron Association would like to go on record in thanking those who contributed that information. Our thanks are due to-

Neville Parnell for allowing us to reproduce items from his publication *Whispering Death*;  
Steward Wilson for permission to reproduce items from his publication *Beaufort, Beaufighter and Mosquito*  
Robert K. Piper of Canberra for allowing us to reproduce in total his story *The Enemy Trod Our Shores*, and also for his help shown me in extracting information from RAAF Archives when asked.  
The Staff of RAAF Historical Records and Information Service for their willingness in producing copies of maps, data sheets and photographs when requested.  
The Staff of the Australian War Memorial for permission to reproduce  
*Beaufighter Bash* from RAAF Saga  
*Cleaning the Cannons* from RAAF Log  
*Beaufighters* from RAAF Log.

Mr. Bob Alford for permission to copy his painting showing EH-X formatting on EH-C over Timor and for many other phone calls and letters containing information pertinent to our history.

Mr. John Haslett for his help in producing information on the loss of A19-192 and A19-208 (Wackett and Ritchie) and also to the Wackett family for some photographs supplied and the Central Australian Aviation Museum Staff for a complete copy of all correspondence and reports pertaining to this subject.

Mr. Howard Young of Kununurra, W.A., president of the Truscott Tribute Committee for details and photographs of Truscott Airfield.

Mr. Peter Saint for permission to use his photograph of the plaque at the memorial at Truscott and F/Sgt Eric McNab for permission to use his original photograph of the Duty Pilot's Tower.

Mr. Ron Lambert of 457 Squadron for the use of the photograph depicting A19-172 burning on Millingimbi strip and photograph of the Spitfire on the strip being used as a radio relay aircraft during the raid.

The Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories for permission to reproduce information and map supplied on 'Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands'.

Wing Commander G. J. Baesjou, A.M., Headquarters Base Squadron, Tindall, for supplying the *History of No. 58 OBU at Truscott*.

Air Commodore Rogers of RAAF, Amberly, for the trouble to locate photographs of a wreck on Cartier Island.

The Department of Administrative Services, Australian Archives, for information supplied on Millingimbi, Truscott and Drysdale River Airstrips.

Special thanks are due to John Sweeny of Hampstead Gardens, Sth. Aus. for setting up and printing this album.

(Jack Brassil)

10/1/45s55.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE  
DIRECTORATE OF WORKS AND BUILDINGS

## AIR FIELD DATA SHEET

When referring to  
this Document quote

257 C.

Copy No. 1.

Name of Airfield..... COOMALIE N.T.  
Location..... Approx.  $\frac{1}{2}$  Mile East of Coomalie Creek Crossing of N-S  
Road and approx. 8 miles S.W. from Batchelor Rly. Stn.  
..... Lat. 13°01' S. Long. 131°08' E.  
See also Drawings Nos. D.W.B. 42/43/1425C. 43/44/839A.  
Howard Sec. 33.  
Parish Agr. Lease 421 County Palmerston Shire  
Military Map Batchelor 1 mile Co-ordinates 152419.  
Civil Aviation No. R.A.A.P. No.

## General Description of Airfield to Include Dispersal Strips and Hideouts:

Surrounding Country: Situated on a flood plain with poor low  
covering vegetation.

Site: To north and west are low foothills.

Only cover suitable for dispersal is on ridge at N.E end of  
strip.  
 $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles of taxiway, cleared 150' wide and gravelled 35 ft.  
wide.

Dispersal, 42 M.B Inserts 35 primed gravel hardstandings and  
splinterproof of which 29 Inserts are camouflaged with overhead  
netting and hessian garnishing. Remainder hardstandings only.  
Nos 37/40 gravel only. Inserts Nos, 35/43 to have further  
constructions.

4.2 miles primed taxiways.  
Alert hardstandings primed 2-300 x 85, 2-200' x 50'.  
51 Squadron Camp  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to N.

1 P R U Camp  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to N.N.W.

Access: Roads to Camps sealed, connects with Main N-S roads

## STRIPS

Magnetic Bearing.	Length Feet.	Width Feet.	Slopes Longtl.	Surface.	Max. Poss. Extension in Feet.

## RUNWAYS

Magnetic Bearing.	Length Feet.	Width Feet.	Slopes Longtl.	Surface.	Max. Poss. Extension in Feet.
167°	5200'	100'	1%	Sealed gravel. Graded 300' cleared 420- 550'	None possible

I.J. Phillips P/O

9.7.43.

Revised F/L Watson on information from F/L Graham

P.P.L. 6069 742

2/12/44

Meteorological Information: Observations Recorded at .....

Winds—North	%	South West	%
North East	%	West	%
East	%	North West	%
South East	%	Calm	%
South	%		

Total 100.00%

Prevailing NW-SE turbulent wind conditions around foothills of Daly Range.

Incidence of Cloud:

Heavy during January, February and March.

Incidence of Dust:

Considerable during dry season.

Approx. 100  
Altitude.....Feet. Mag. Dec. .... 4 - E

Average Annual Rainfall 40.....Inches. (not checked).

Special Remarks: Max & Min. monthly rainfall recorded Adelaide River: period of 6 years.

Jan. 1899-856	April 116 - 0	July 0 - 0	Oct. 454 - 0
Feb. 1263-534	May 0 - 0	Aug. 0 - 0	Nov. 1002 - 286
March. 2120-187	June 181 - 0	Sep. 172 - 0	Dec. 681 - 245

Soil and Subsoil:

2000ft. across bull-dust flat.  
North section across gravel ridge.

Obstructions to Flying: Trees, 25ft. high along edge of strip. Duty Pilot's tower 30ft. high on West side of Northern end of strip- Hill, approx.  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from N.W end of runways, bearing 32°, angle of elevation 4°- Hill approx.  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from N.W end of runway, bearing 330° angle of elevation 4°- hill, approx  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from N.W end of runways bearing 230° angle of elevation 5°30' - Hill, approx. 2 miles from N.W end of Runway, bearing 165° angle of elevation 0° 40'.

Airfield is suitable for the following types: Under:

Dry conditions: Medium bomber.

Wet conditions: Medium bomber.

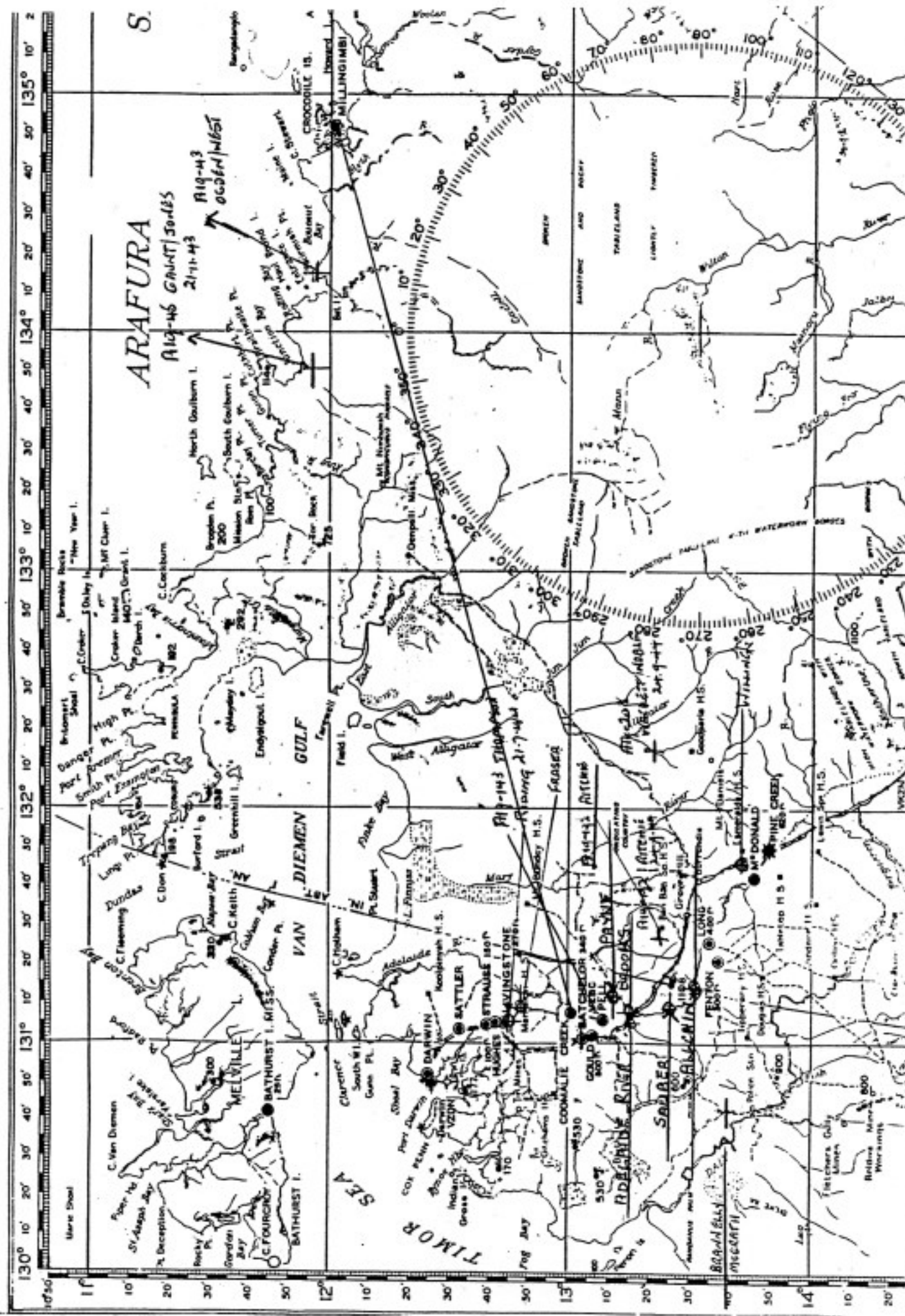
General Remarks: Strip is cleared 210 ft. wide 135 ft. width is graded and sealed gravel runway is 85ft. wide.  
Splinter proofing of Inserts is not complete;

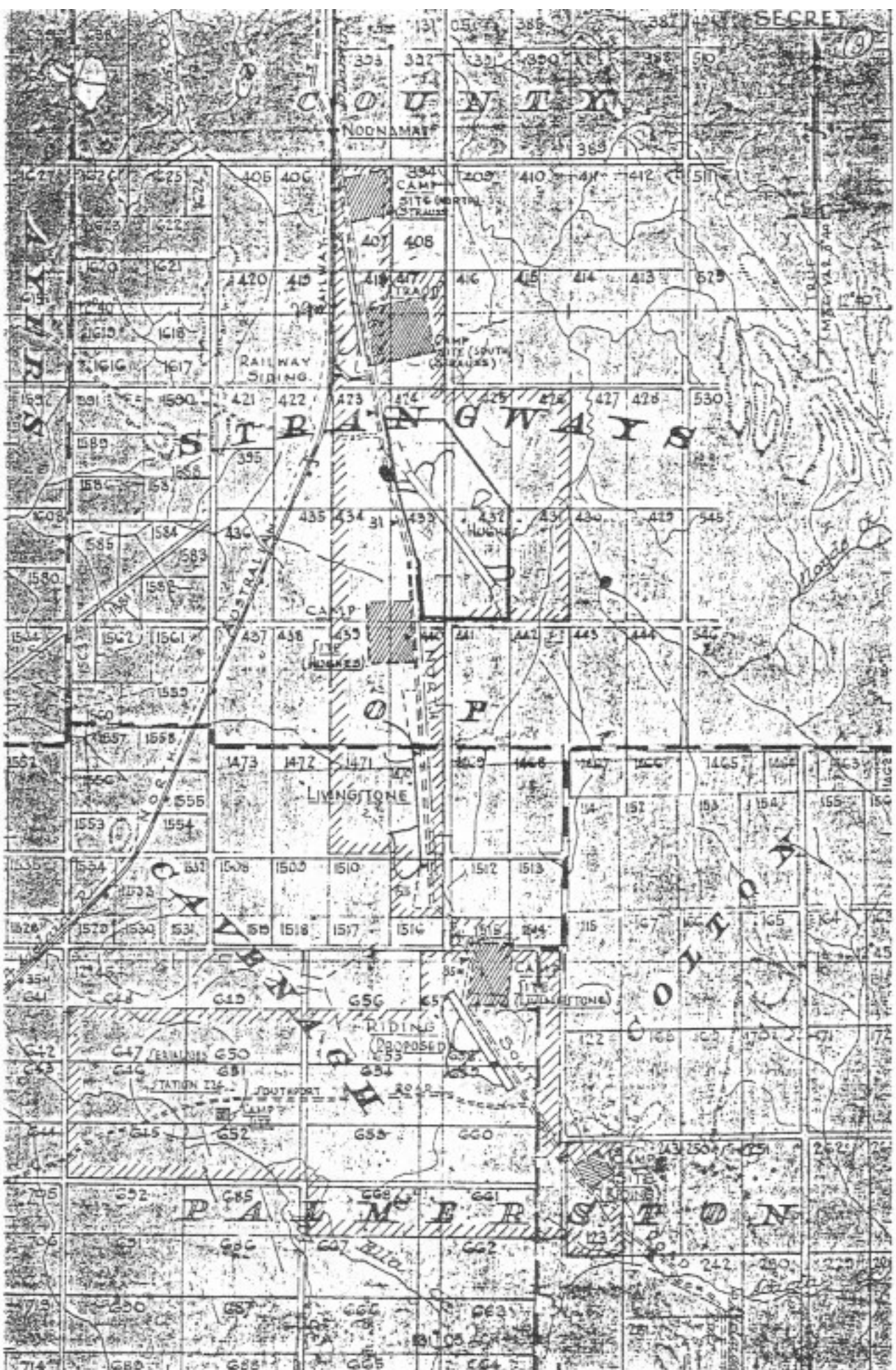


# DARWIN - MILL

ALL SERVICE USERS OF THIS MAP are requested to make necessary corrections hereon and return it to R.A.F. Headquarters through the usual channels.  
 NOTE: Adequate surveys of the area covered by this sheet have not been made.  
 SPOT HEIGHTS MAY THEREFORE BE INACCURATE

MARCH 1944



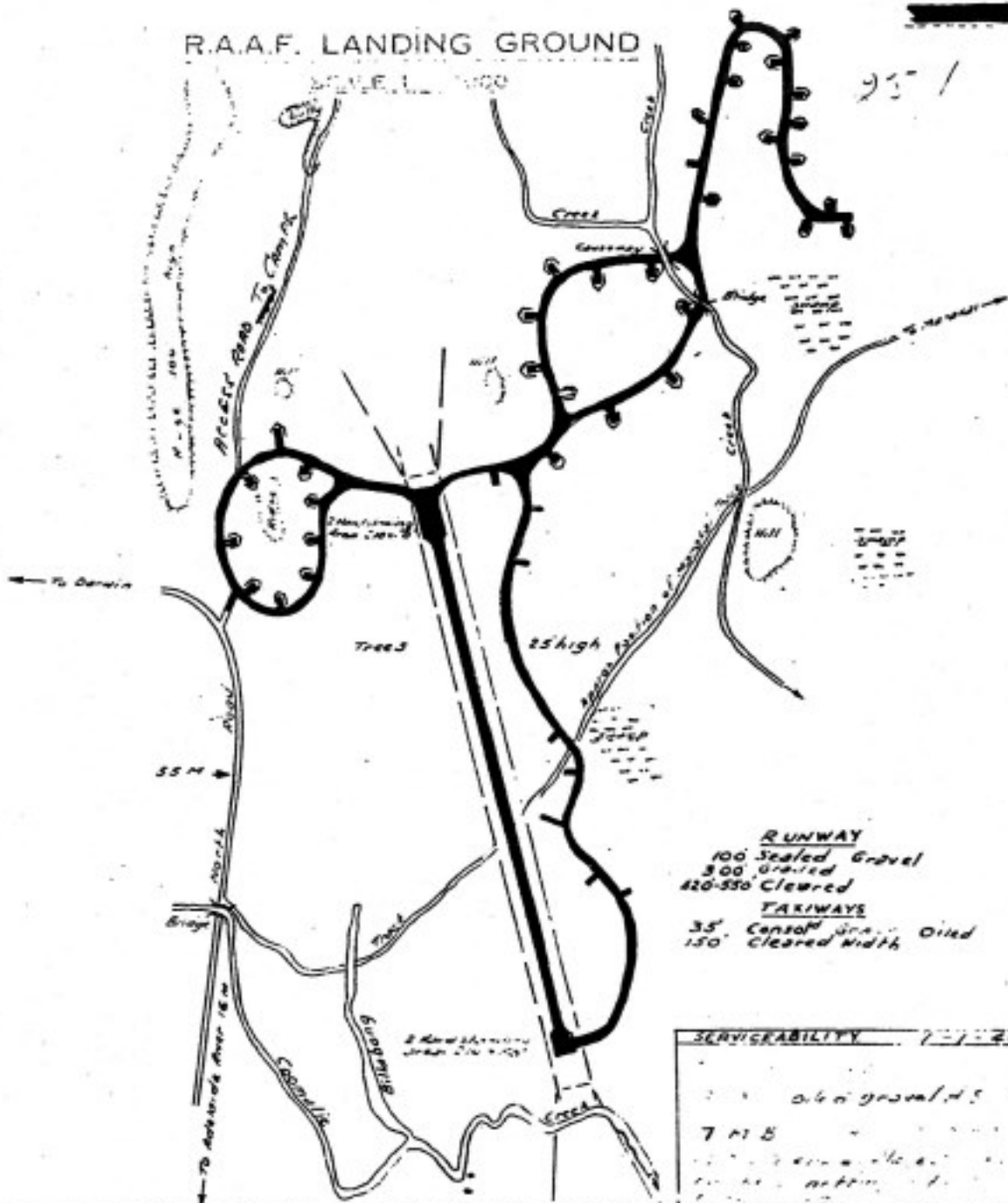


DRAWN BY ELLOYD G. 1343. LOCALITY MAP. DRGN 4343K25  
 TRACED BY ...  
 CHECKED BY ...



# R.A.A.F. LANDING GROUND

257



**RUNWAY**  
 100 Sealed Gravel  
 300 Gravel  
 420-550 Cleared

**TAXIWAYS**  
 35' Concrete Gravel Dred  
 150' Cleared Width Dred

SERVICABILITY	7-1-24

LOCATION - Lat. 13° 01' Long. 131° 08'  
 ALTITUDE - 100' Approx.  
 WINDS - N-E-S  
 NE-SW  
 E-W  
 NW-SE  
 CALM

**COOMALIE N.T.**

PLANNED BY O.B.  
 CLASSIFICATION  
 BY DESIGN M.B.  
 W. WEATHER M.B.

**DRAWING No. 42/43/14256**



Sqdn/Ldr B. F. ROSE



Sqdn/Ldr C. F. READ



Wg/Cmdr F. W. B. MANN



Sqdn/Ldr G. D. WENTWORTH



Sqdn/Ldr J. A. P. BOYD



Sqdn/Ldr J. C. BLACK



BEAUFIGHTER IN ACTION S. W. P. A. DEPICTS EH-X FORMATING ON EH-C AFTER MISSION TO EAST TIMOR  
Photograph taken from original painting by Bob Alford - reproduced with his permission

# Anniversaries

Continuing our mini-profiles, this issue we feature the Bristol Beaufighter which first flew in July 1939.

**Bristol Beaufighter (R.A.A.F. Service)**  
Serial A19; Quantity Ordered 218  
Entered Service 1942; Left Service 1951  
Roles: Strike Fighter, Target Towing

**DAP Beaufighter**  
Serial A8; Quantity Ordered 364  
Entered Service 1944; Left Service 1957  
Roles: Strike Fighter, Target Towing, Missile Recovery.

In 1938, the Bristol Company suggested a fighter version of their new Beaufort torpedo bomber. The conversion involved using Hercules instead of Taurus engines, with propellers of increased diameter and re-designing the entire fuselage. The pilot sat centrally in a very short nose. Four prototypes were ordered, and the Beaufighter was born. Australia started receiving deliveries of this aircraft in 1942, the first seventy-two being MK I models. Further variants completed the R.A.A.F. order of 218 aircraft whereupon the Government Aircraft Factory started production of the Beaufighter 21.

The model was equivalent to the English Navy X type with more powerful engines and modified fuselage. The first Australian built Beaufighter flew on 26th May 1944 with production at Mason and Fisherman's Bend continuing to late 1945. Three hundred and sixty-four Beaufighter 21's were built in this period with the aircraft finally phasing out of service in 1957. The last operational Beau, A8-357 was flown to Edinburgh for disposal on 9th December 1957.

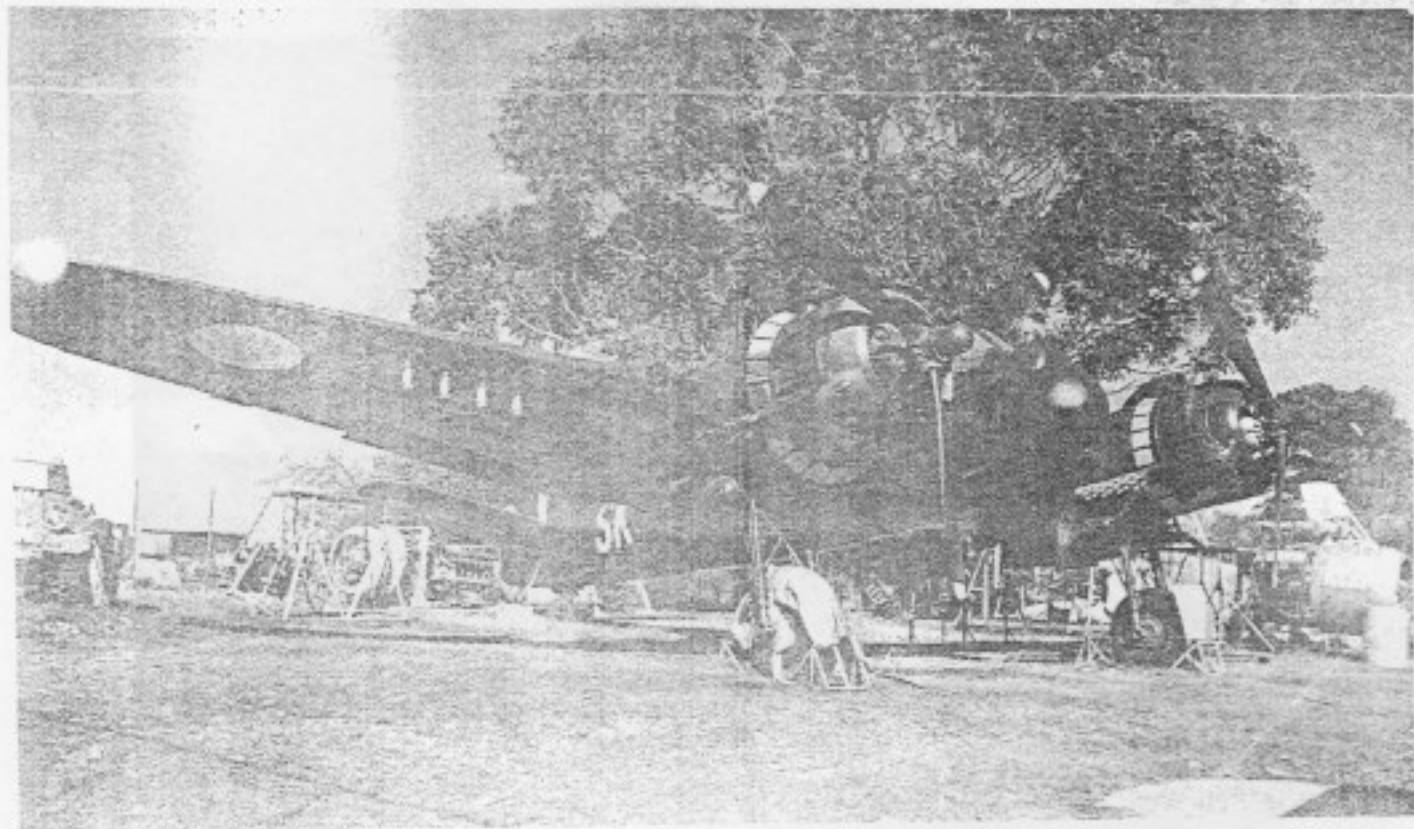
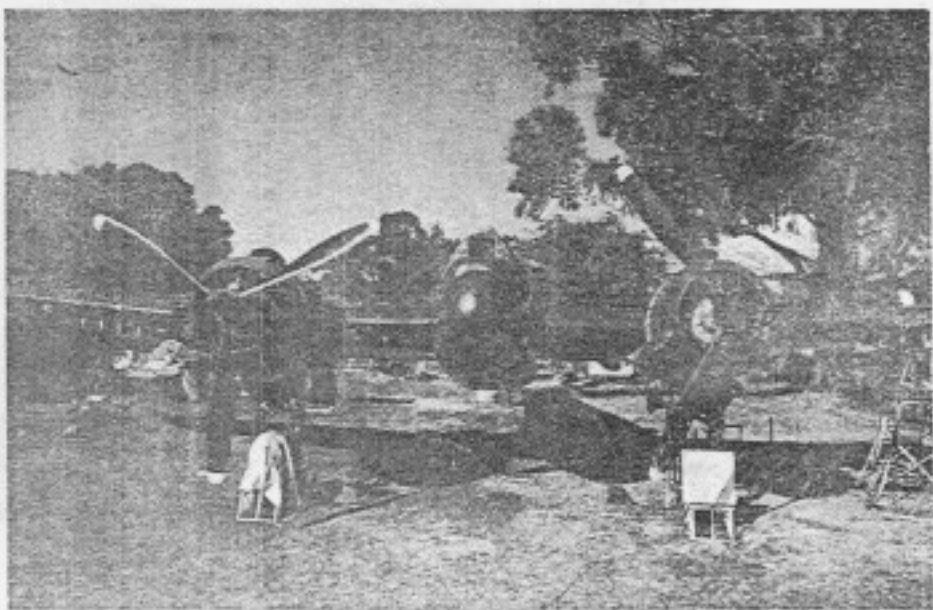
Australia's last surviving Beaufighter A8-328 resides at the Moorabbin Air

Museum in Melbourne. Built at Fisherman's Bend in 1945, she was too late to see active service so the aircraft was converted to a target tow role and carried out these duties until donated to the Lord Mayor's Camp at Portsea in 1959. This was the first aircraft the Museum acquired in April 1962. Overhauled and restored, this aircraft now takes pride of place in the new complex at the museum.

Other known Beaufighters include one for long-term restoration in Sydney to air-worthy status, as well as one in the U.K. being built by Skysport Engineering to flying

status as well. The U.S.A.F. Museum in Dayton Ohio just recently received an Aussie Beau Mk 1c, A19-43. This aircraft was one of the British-built hatch and is known to have served with 31 Squadron. Restoration will commence shortly for static display.

*Moorabbin's very rare Beaufighter A8-328. Even though the quantity built was high, the type is almost extinct except for a few surviving examples. (Both Photos: Craig Justo)*





Our Beau at Moorabin John White Reminiscing



Jack Campbell

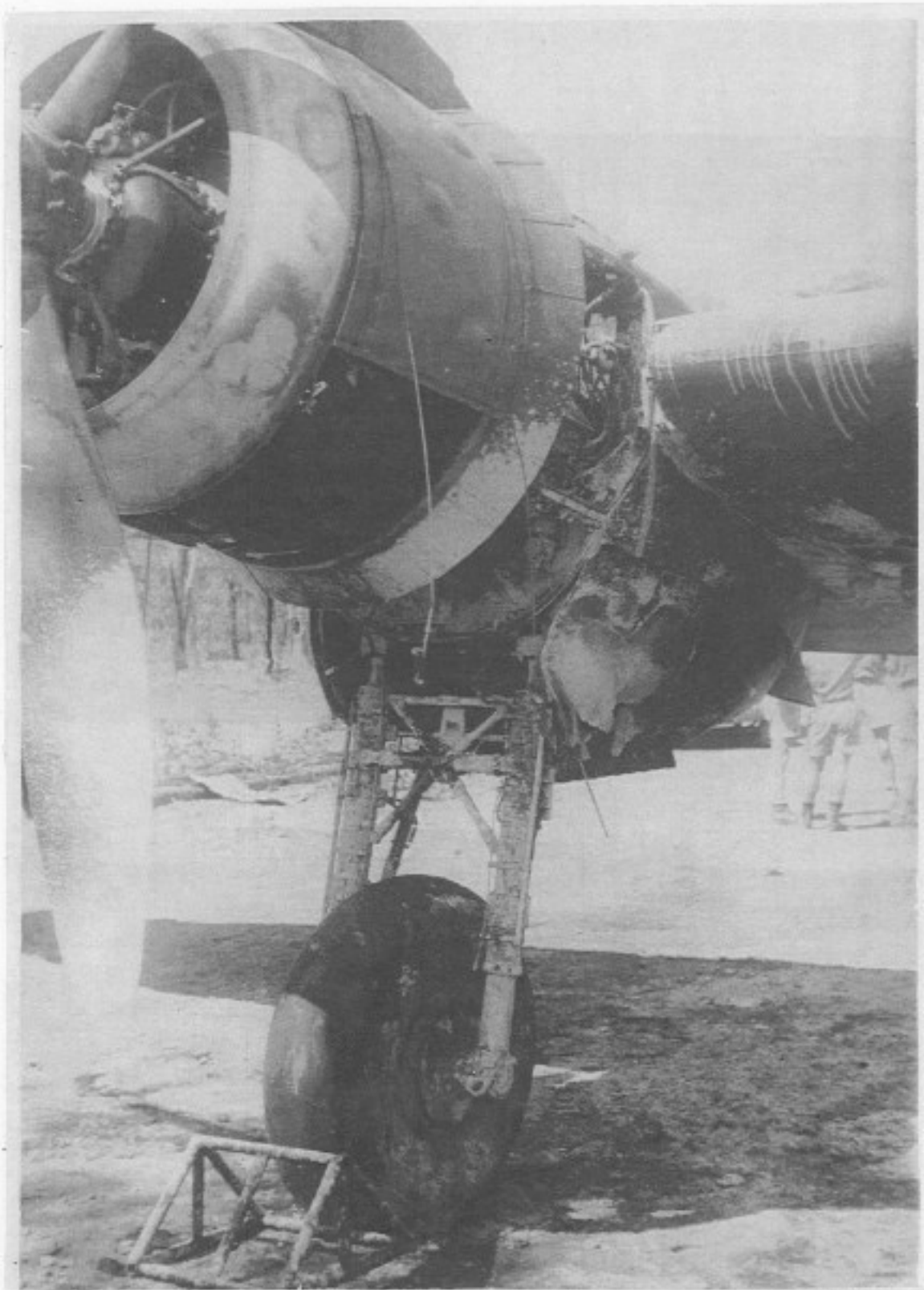




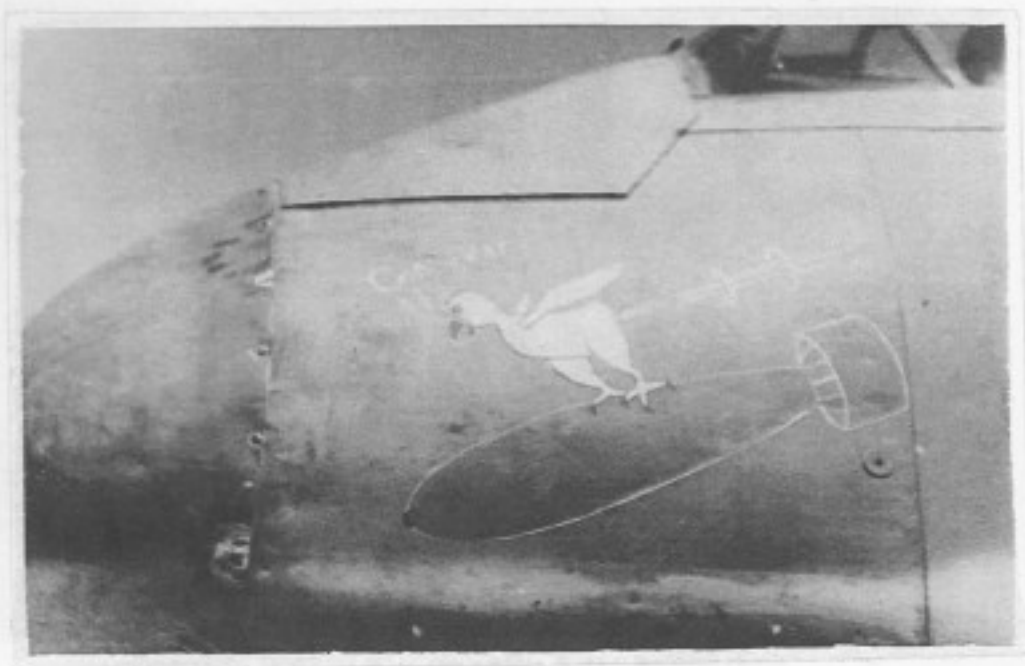
AIRCRAFT RECOVERED FROM SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF DARWIN - Pic. Frank Stewart



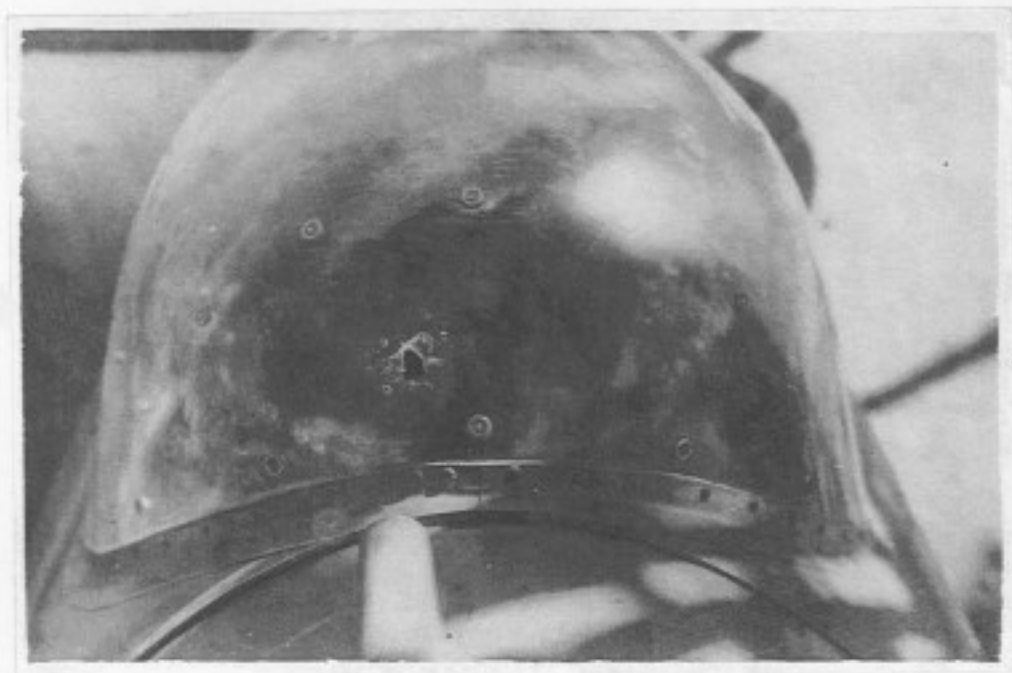
FOUND ABOUT 20m WEST OF COOMALIE CONTROL TOWER



A 19-203 JUST RECEIVED COOMALIE, AUGUST 1944. DAMAGE TO WHEEL UNDERCARRIAGE, NACELLE & WING CAUSED BY AIRMAN TREADING ON EXPOSED TERMINAL OF BATTERY CART. - Pic: Frank Stewart



DAMAGE TO FUSELAGE CAUSED BY RICOCHETING 20mm SHELL



DAMAGE TO CUPOLA CAUSED BY RICOCHETING 20mm SHELL



JACK BRASSIL MICK HAMMOND LES WATSON Cpl CROUCH  
Pilot DAVE STRACHAN



CAMP FOR THE NIGHT AT MARAKAI SWAMP

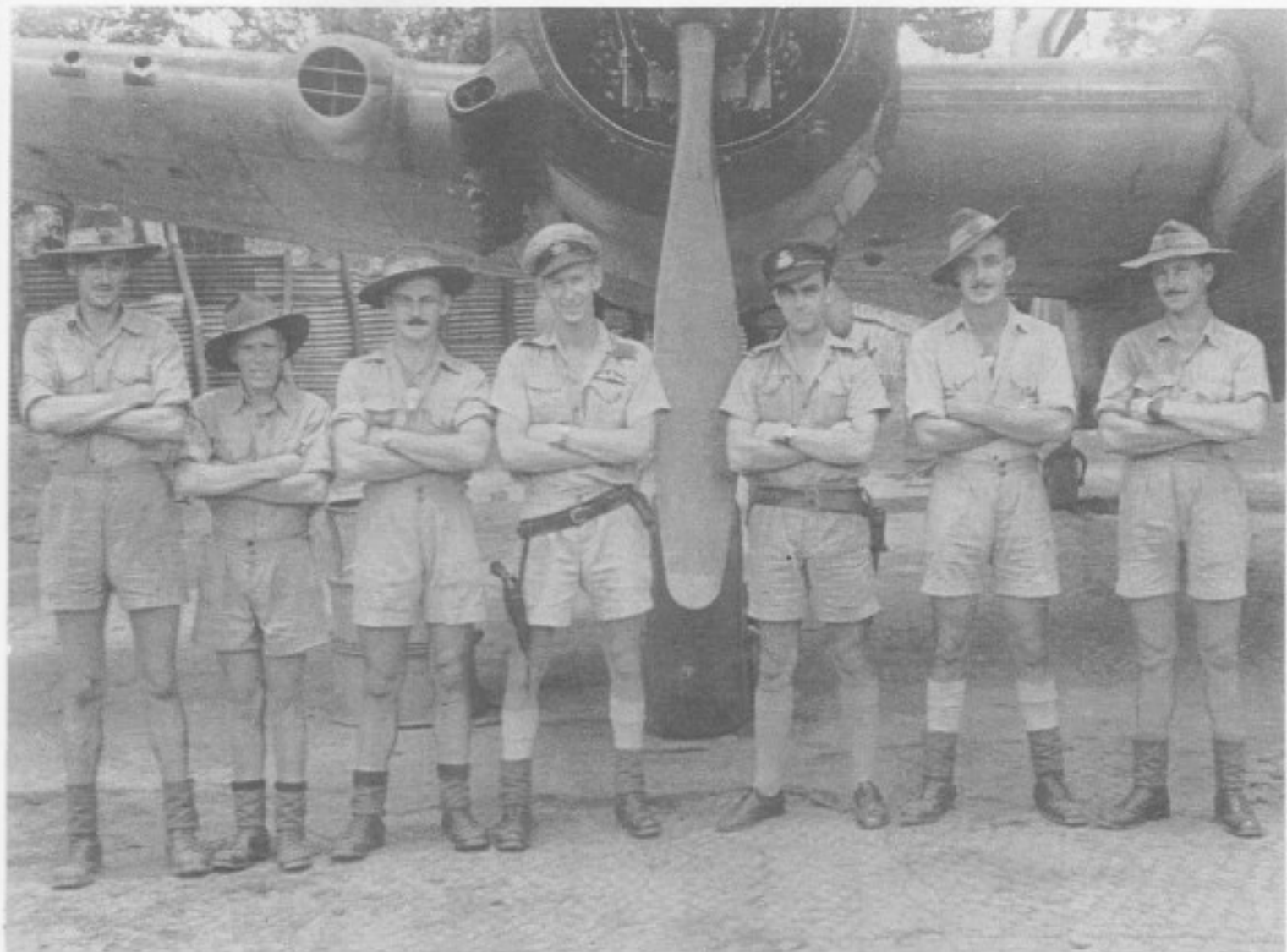


A19-78 IN MARAKAI SWAMP AFTER ENGINE FAILURE



AT COOMALE CREEK

BILL MANN and RAY HARBER WITH SOME OF 'A' FLIGHT





AT MELVILLE ISLAND  
Photo: R. Breach









Adelaide River (Apl/44)

BOB MILLER FRED ANDERSON DAVE STRACHAN  
RON BULLEN DOUG CRUICKSHANK MURRAY WESTE

(Photo: F. Anderson)



Picnicking at Darwin

(Photo: L. Gurr)





The Airman's Mess



The Sergeant's Mess

(Photos: K. Spencer)



Sick Quarters - Coomalie Creek



Recreation Hut - Coomalie Creek

(Photos: K. Spencer)



The Officer's Mess - Coomalie Creek

(Photo: K. Spencer)



A typical campsite - Coomalie Creek



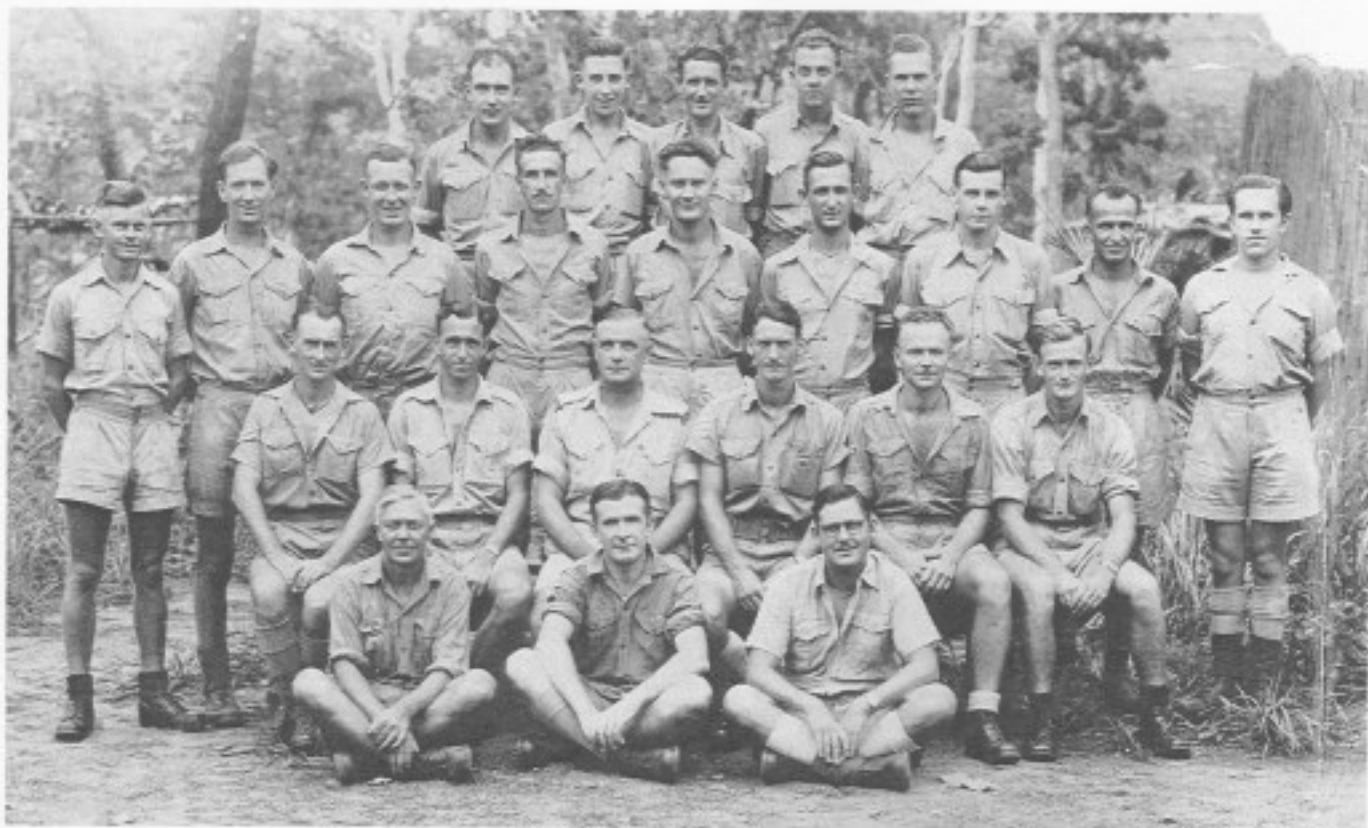
Hoy Parnell on A19-158

(Photo: R. Parnell)



John Sweeney, Charlie Rose & Barney Lord at Berri Springs  
(Photo: J. Sweeney)

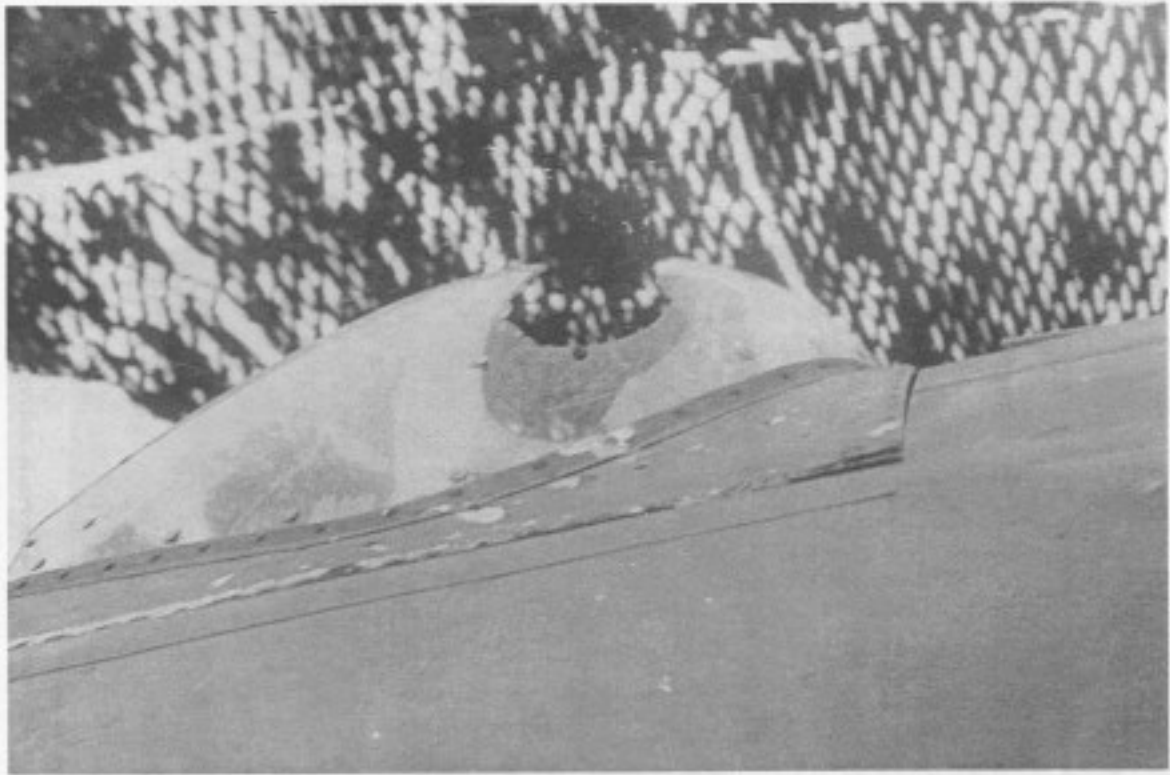
STORES PERSONELL



STORES PERSONELL

(Photo: Bill Dunbar)

LAC Petherick LAC Jackson LAC Milton LAC White LAC Biddle  
LAC Stephens LAC J. Egan LAC Johnson LAC Wright LAC Gurr LAC Betts LAC Clewlow LAC Candy LAC Tierney  
Cpl Ryal W/O Martin F/O Adams Sgt Hunt Cpl Martin Cpl McKinnon LAC Moore LAC Egan LAC LLawollyn (Photo: Lorna Gurr)



Damage to Cupola A19-36 (21-11-43)



W/O Cliff Monk Col Ashes (Dutch)

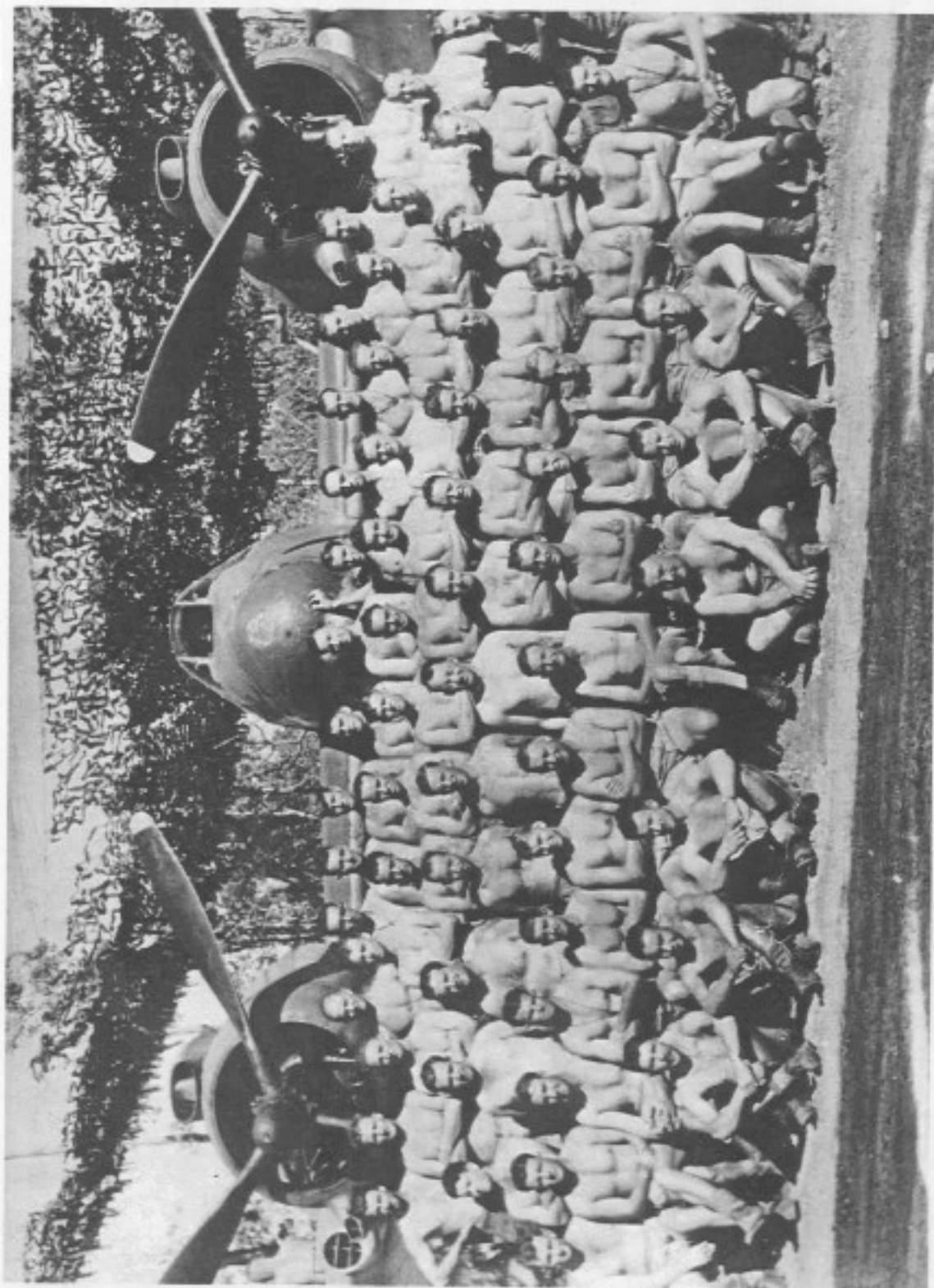
W/C Bill Mann F/O Ray Barber

at Exmouth Gulf

Norm James Ken Spencer  
Clive Burlace Cyril Hansen Jim Gordon

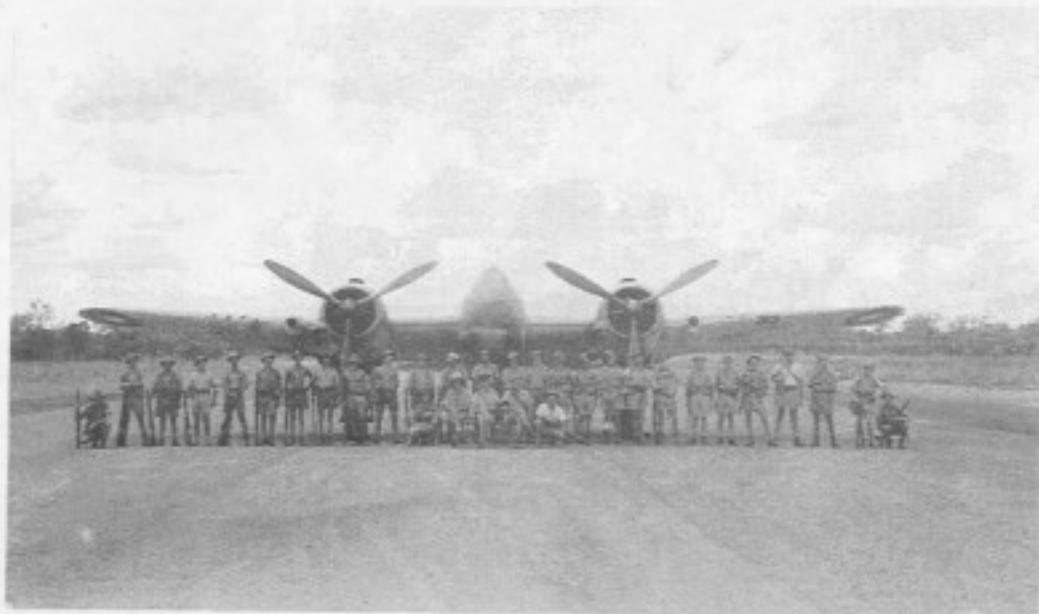
(Photos K. Spencer)





LAC Murphy Heriotto Cpl Dean LAC Burgess Sgt Jim Deepan LAC Stoddard Hall Sandy Ian Gray Fox (T) Alan Neuner Nokor Lucy  
 Cpl McKenzie LAC Heale Long Johnstone Cpl Craig LAC Shakespeare Bill Walters Frank Somerson Ron Grose Bill Brunnan Colin Nutt Heworth Francis Jack Fry  
 LAC Hutchins Stan Curran Morson Cliff Pittman Alf Pirrassone Sgt Martin LAC Rag Koots Cec Russell Keith Jeffries Jim Partridge Walden Saint McPherson  
 LAC Morrey Ken Bresden Jim Perry Ned Clough Cpl Bourne Sgt Hen Grestrox W/O James F/L Mick Hammond F/Sgt Fred Schill Sgt Merrisath LAC Kemp Cpl Wilson LAC  
 Merrisath Cpl Anders  
 LAC Smallman Temple John Woods Rolly Kicks Jones Flemming  
 (Photo: Ian Gray)





The Japs wouldn't dare invade



'A' Flight maintenance staff on the job



Photo's A. Murray



*"A little masterpiece of architecture" Neville Quarry*

# 31 Squadron Chapel



After Darwin was bombed by Japanese aircraft in February 1942, Australia formed a new squadron of fighter pilots to defend the continent's northern coast. Trained in Wagga Wagga, the 350 men of the RAAF's 31 Squadron Beau-Fighter moved in November 1942 to a new airbase at Coomalie Creek in the Northern Territory. A year later, in time for a Christmas service in 1943, the squadron had built its own chapel, of timber poles and sheets of corrugated iron, in scrub country near the base. Following a 50-year reunion of ex-squadron members recently, this rude vernacular structure was reconstructed by students, graduates and staff of the Faculty of Architecture and Building at the Northern Territory University. Their work has been honoured by this year's jury with a Special Recognition Award. Jurors noted, however, that the reconstruction did not conform exactly to the restoration principles of the ICOMOS Burra Charter. To provide protection against termites which ravaged the original structure, the project team decided to rebuild the frame in steel rather than timber.

#### Jury Comments

**Neville Quarry** "Once in a while, there comes to a jury's attention a building which does not fit easily into the nominated categories but which has a uniqueness that deserves recognition and celebration. Such a building is found, if directions are very carefully followed, down the bitumen south of Darwin to a point known as 55 mile, and then off into the bush along a barely discernible track into terrain that is now a cattle station ... an ecclesiastical shed with rough bush poignancy."

**Robert Cheesman** "Its simplicity, fundamental functionalism and delicate disposition in the scrub give it a special quality. The reconstruction by students and architects is worthy of special recognition."

**Anne Cunningham** "For three main reasons, this building is worthy of an award: the original design is an inspired response to climatic, function and contextual requirements, particularly considering the paucity of materials and money available in 1943, secondly, for the research undertaken by the students and graduates and thirdly, for the very competent reconstruction."

**Glenn Murett** "This is an odd work to be considered ... yet to fail to acknowledge the care and effort in making a work so light, frail almost, and appropriate to spirit, spirit of place, light, space, shade, ventilation and connectedness to nature, would deny the joy one feels ..."

#### 31 Squadron Chapel Reconstruction, Northern Territory

Original architect unknown, Reconstruction by staff and students of the Faculty of Architecture and Building at Northern Territory University—head of department Richard Luxton, assisted by Andrew Schulze, Mark Smith, Mark Christianson.

*Above left*, the entrance to the chapel is defined by a gabled porch of corrugated steel. *Opposite page*, the church in context.

Acknowledgment is made to Architecture Media Australia of Port Melbourne for permission to reproduce this article.

#### THE CHAPEL AT COOMALIE CREEK

In July, 1993, the Chapel, having been rebuilt by Richard Luxton and his University of N. T. students, was awarded the J. G. Knight Conservation Award for excellence by the N. T. Branch of the Royal Institute of Architects.

The Chapel will now be entered for Commonwealth Awards.

On 12th September, 1993, the Chapel was dedicated in a ceremony conducted by Senior RAAF Chaplain, Bishop Adrian Charles.



The Original Chapel



A. C. I Fox playing Cello solo in Chapel



Carpenter Harold Peddy and mate at work on new chapel



C/O Bill Mann reading the lesson



C/O Bill Mann, Padre J. Brown, Padre Bill Dunbar, Cellist ACI Fox (Photos Bill Dunbar)



PADRE ARTHUR WILKINS and PADRE BILL DUNBAR  
(Photos Bill Dunbar)



The Congregation



Typical scrub around Coomalie.

(Photos: Bill Dunbar)

They say that you can eat the nuts from this Corkwood Tree if you boil them for about two hours.

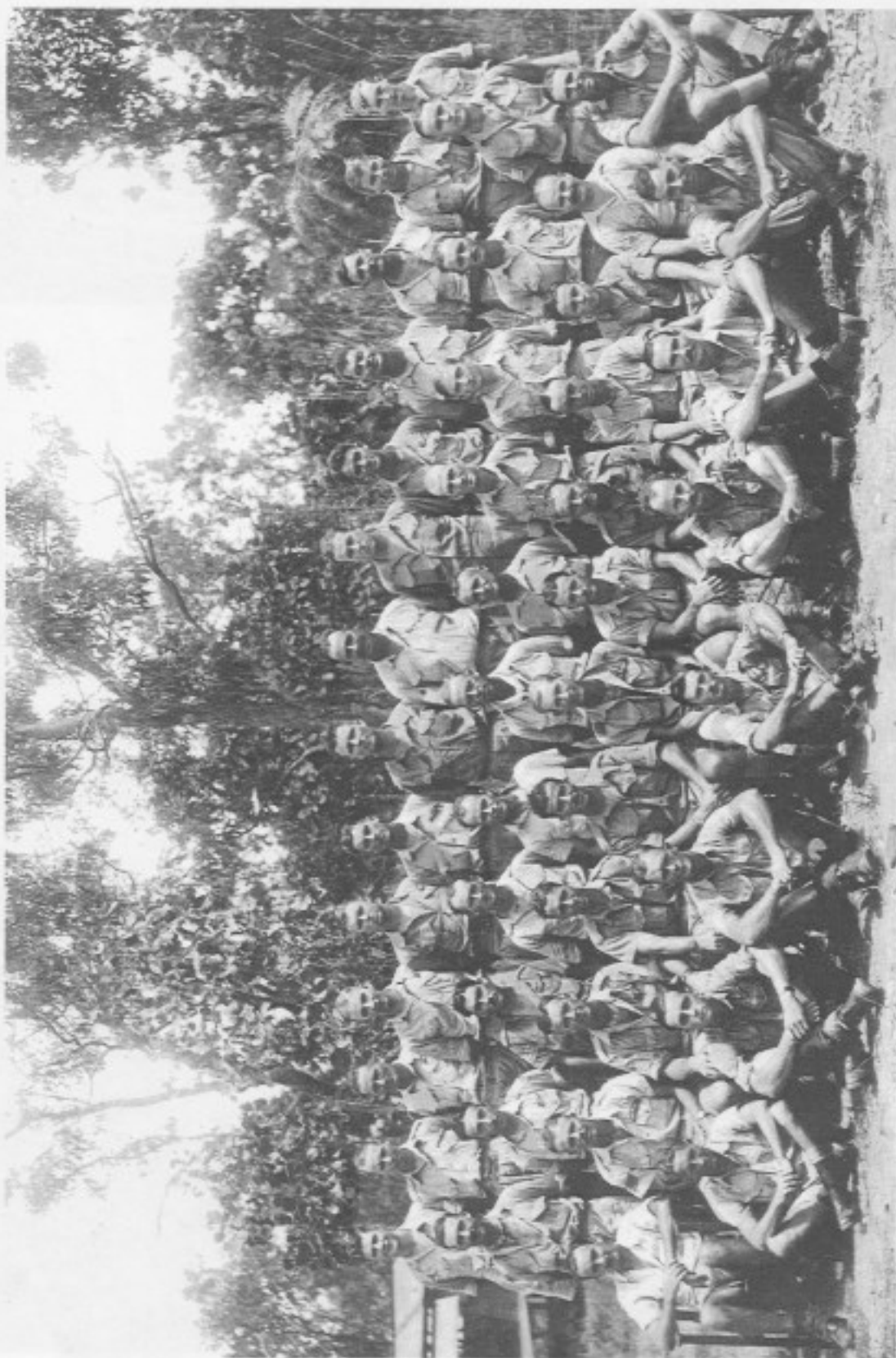


BUSH TUCKER



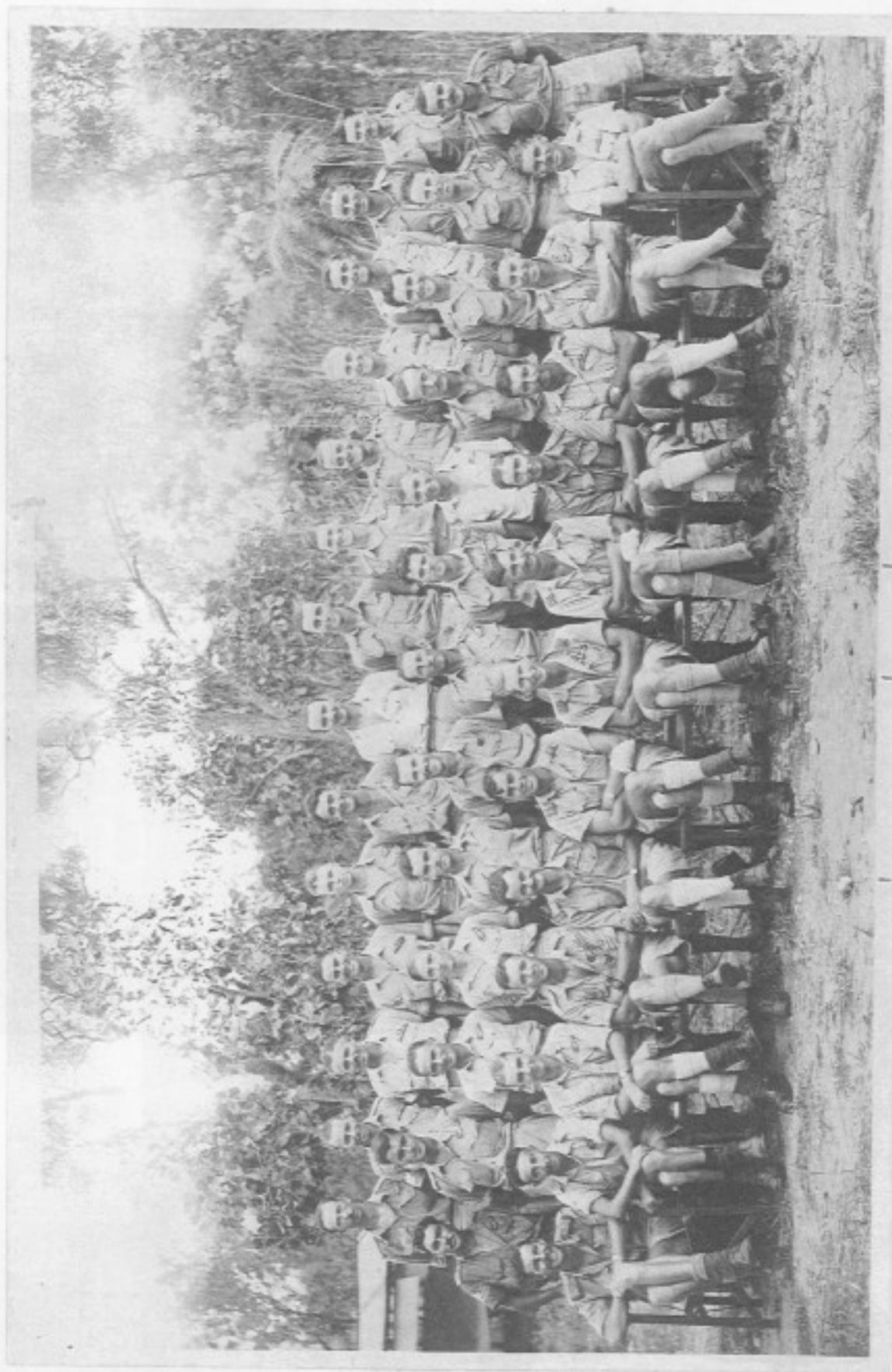
John Sweeny with Squadron pet in the tall grass

MEMBERS OF THE SERGEANTS MESS - COOMALE CREEK, MARCH 1944



BACK ROW  
 R. Harris L. Richee J. Holland B. Jordan R. Plum Warner P. O. Vance R. MacKenzie F. Williams D. Wyatt J. Brasel H. Leslie W. Wright K. Greatrex  
 B. Stevenson  
 CENTRE  
 J. Thompson R. Mayne D. C. Sparke A. Ryall J. Williams E. Meredith B. Sunderland T. McGreehan N. Stamos F. Schloerman D. Wallace  
 FRONT  
 H. Ashbolt W. Rinkin N. James W/O Martin T. Roberts W/Cdr Mann C. Monk L. Watson J. Kennedy B. Chelley O. Smith G. Todd  
 SITTING  
 T. U/k J. Higgins 3. U/k C. Taylor Sheridan 6U/k 7U/k H. Birge  
 (U/k = Unknown)





AIRCREW MEMBERS AT COOMALE CREEK - MARCH, 1944

- R. Woods L. Pliche W. Reikin P. Quance J. Brassil H. Ashbolt J. Hopkins M. Waste R. Bullen A. Cobb L. Mitchell J. Gammah C. Taylor  
D. (Bus) Sparks F. Anderson J. Holland N. Staines R. Harbar K. Spencer W. Mackean B. Miller B. Quantan L. Archer C. Forrester S. Green I. Wickens  
D. Cruckshank R. Mayne R. Jordan P. Boyd N. James C. Burtice W. Mann D. Wintacoth J. Gordon C. Hansen P. Delaney D. Strachan