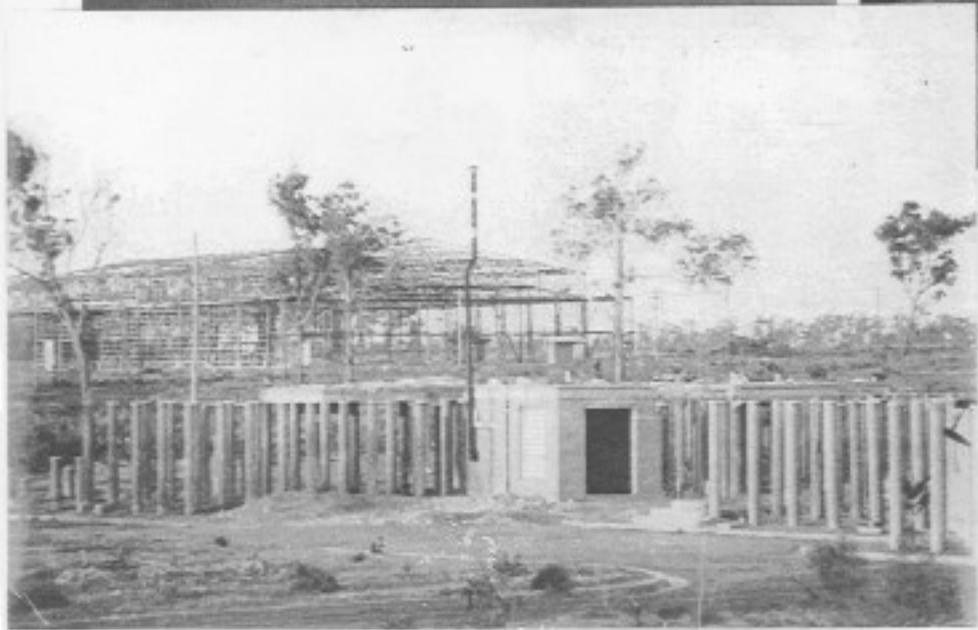
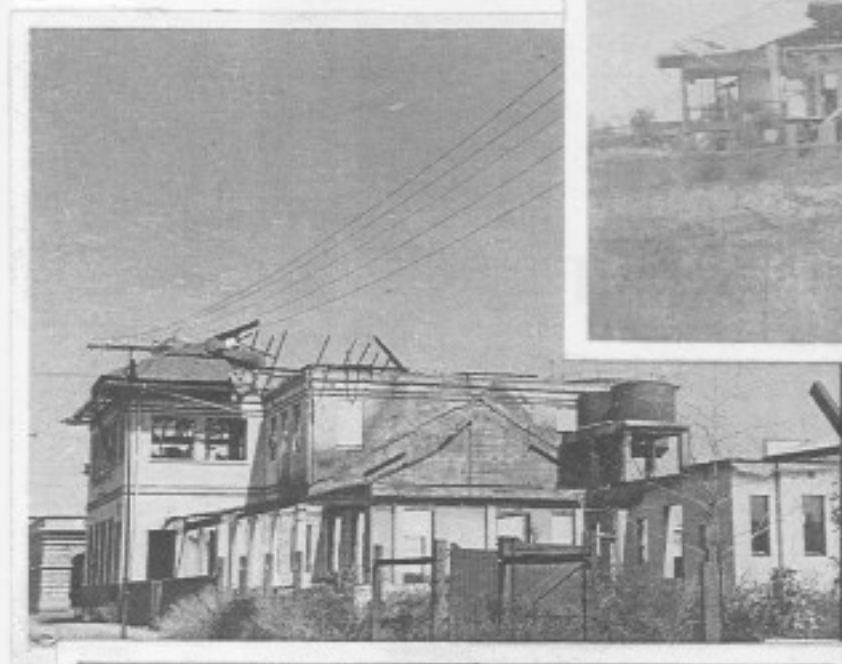


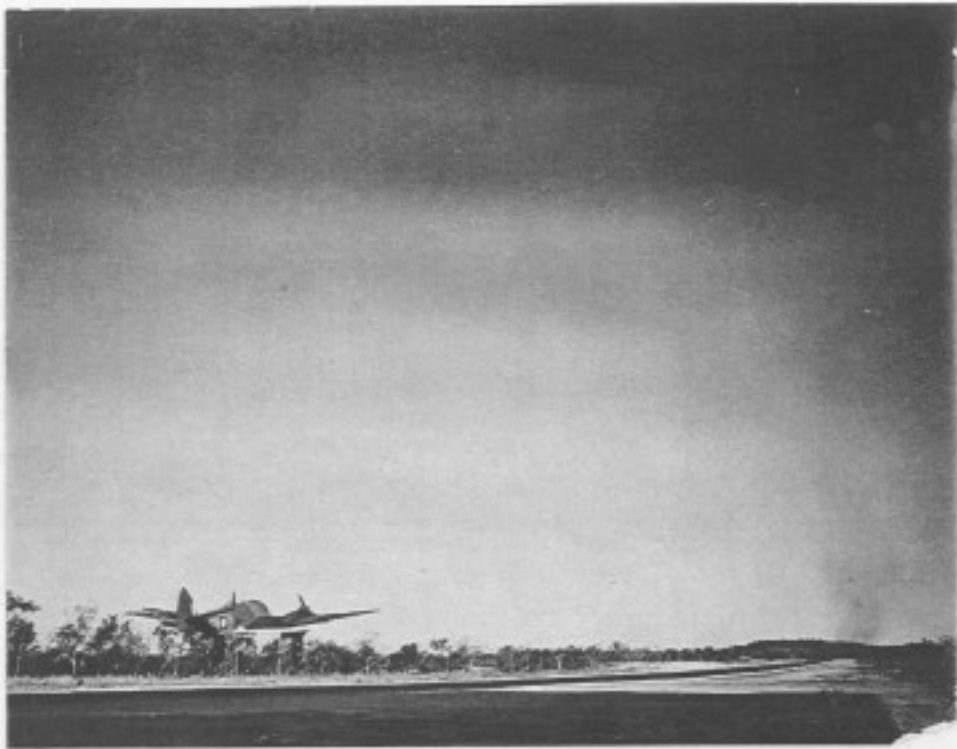
MEMBERS OF OFFICER'S MESS - AUGUST 1943



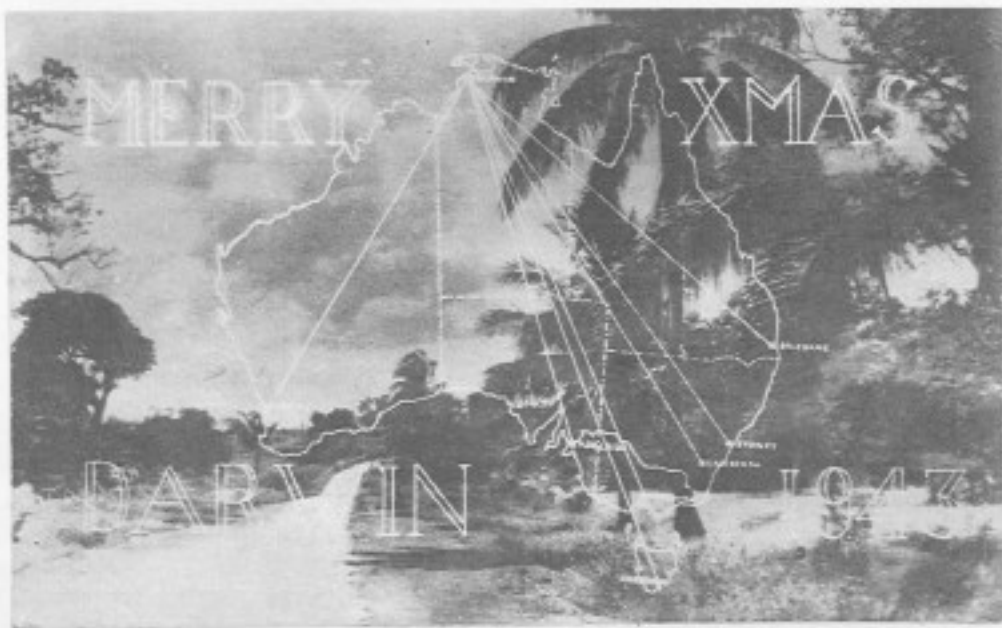
Damage to Darwin in 1942 raids



Darwin Pictures, 1943 (Courtesy Bill Dunbar)



EH-Z landing at Coomale



Armament Section - 1942/43  
 Stan Perry Jack Pearce Frank Foers Slim Gray Rooster Roostead Joe the Goose Snow Hobbs  
 Blue Bickerton Shagger Jones Alf Carey Bob 'Wincie' Noble Chicks Smith (Photo D. Rudstead)



A19-88 off end of strip due to engine failure 9-2-1944 (Photo D. Strachen)

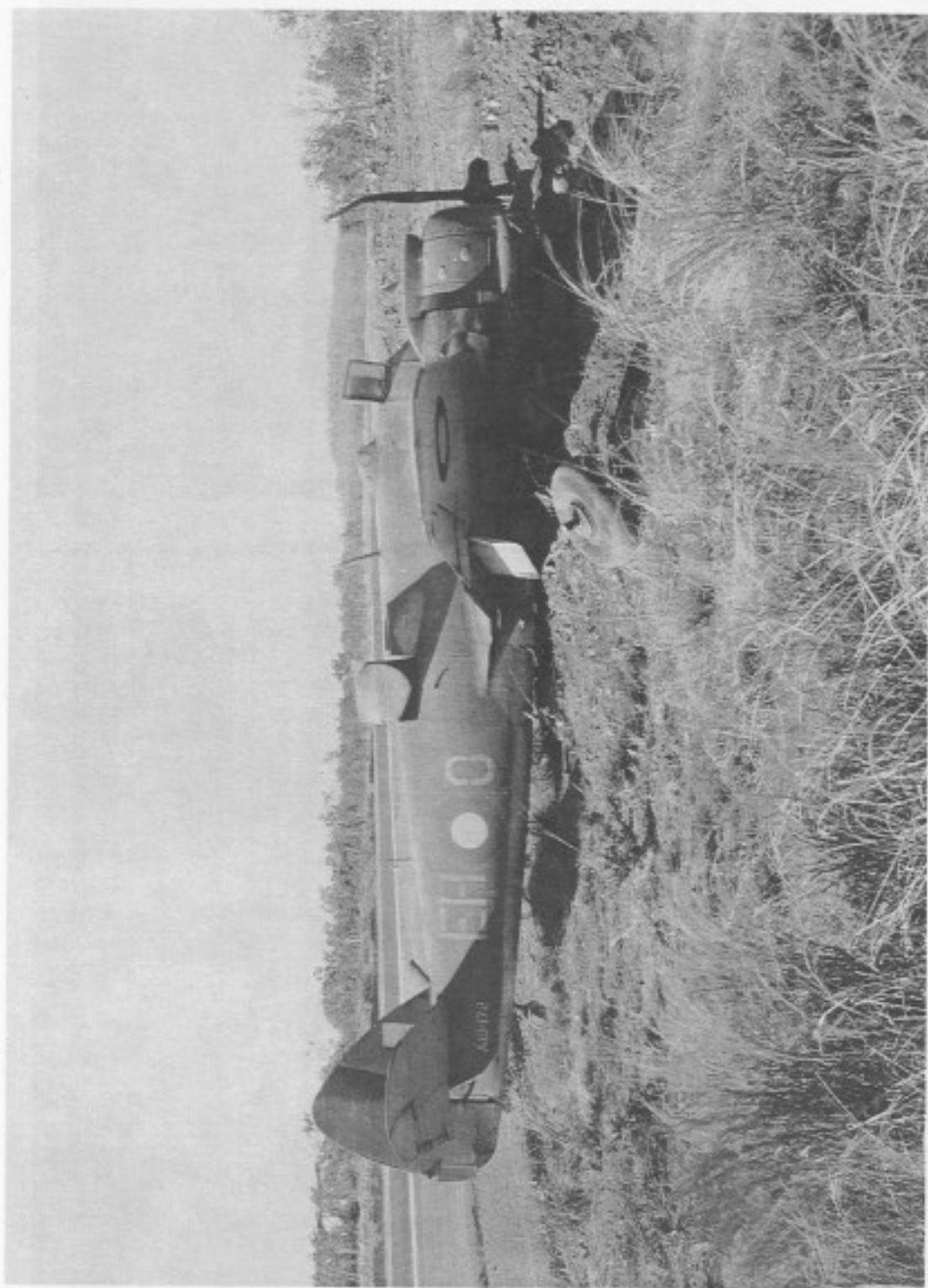




Engineering Officer Frank Stewart searching for 'genuine' spare parts at Morotai Graveyard Sgl Col Waters in attendance



One of 31's contribution to Morotai Graveyard



A19 - 172 swung on take-off at Coomalie Creek - 25/8/44. P/O Bouness. Pilot.

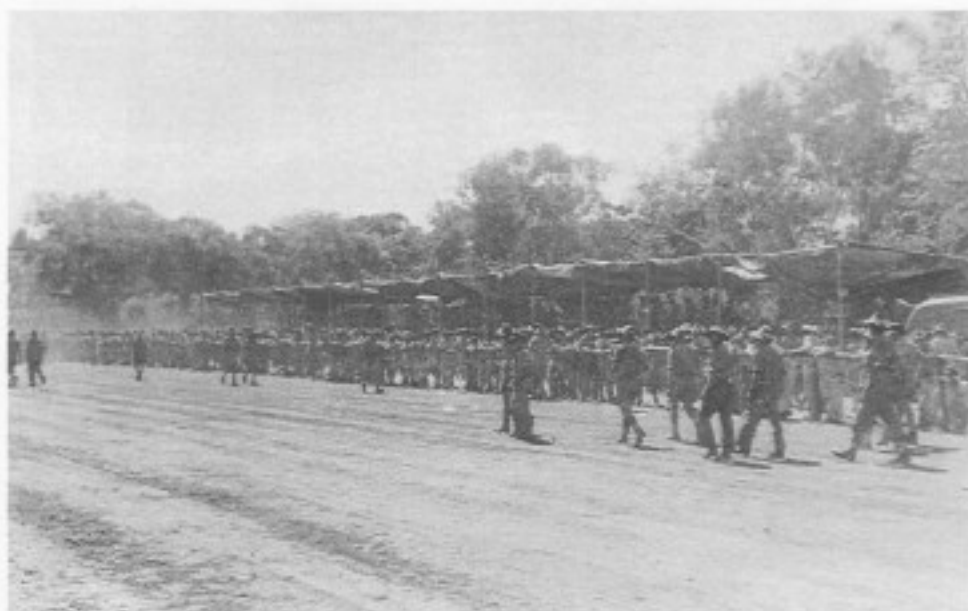
Photo Frank Stewart



Saddling Paddock



31 Squadron Box



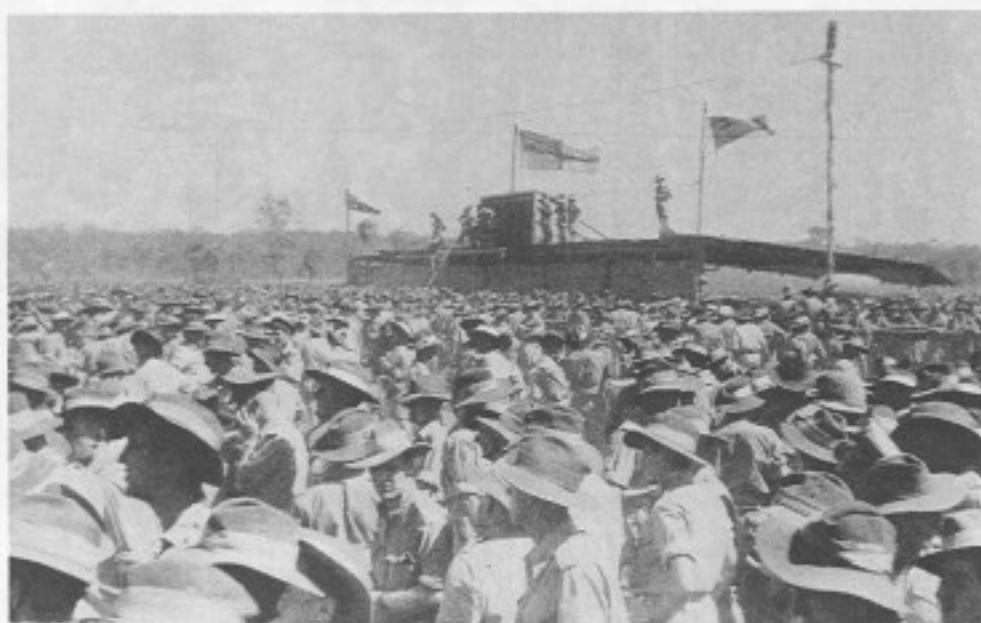
Squadron entry 'He's Away' ran second







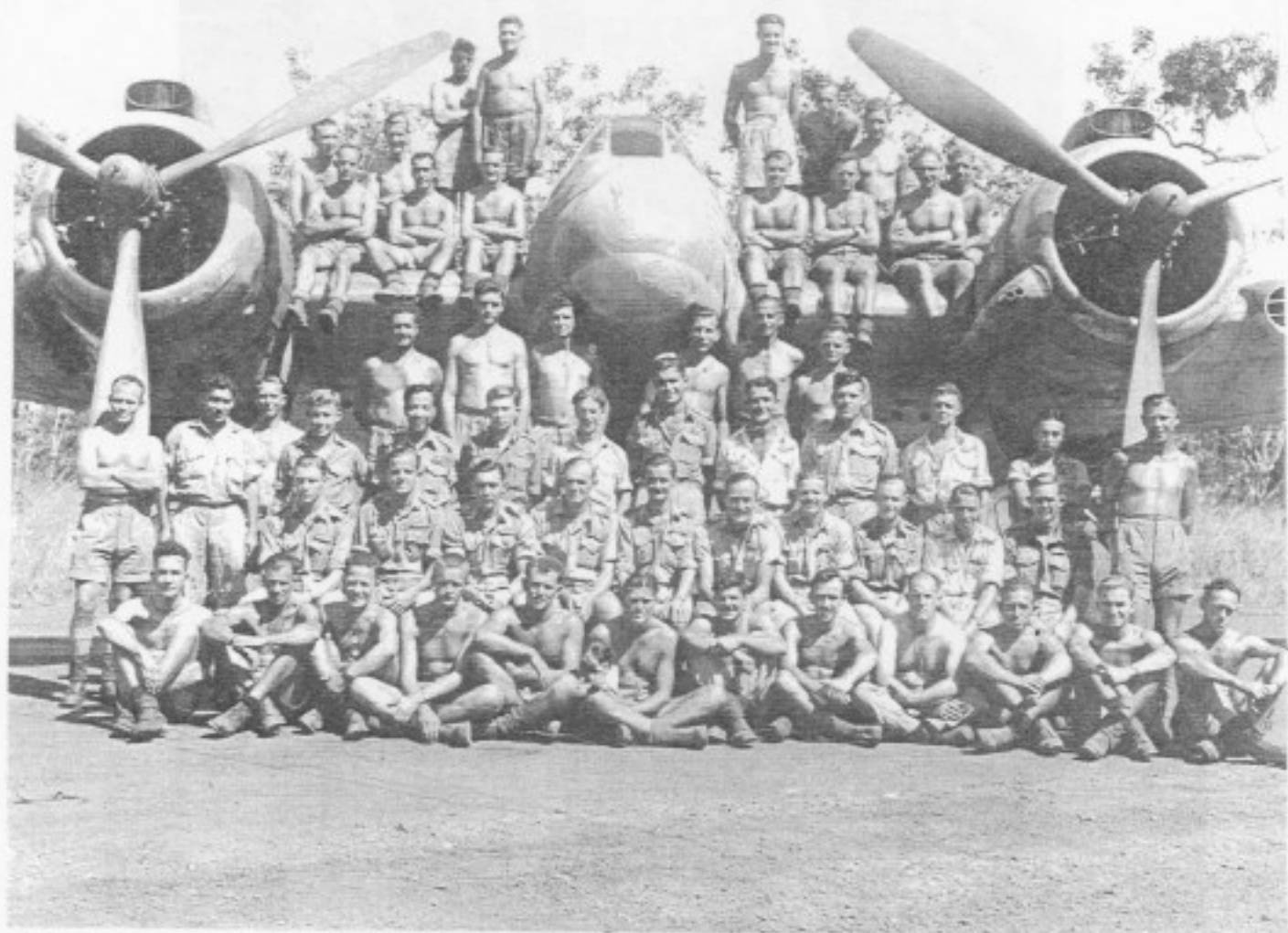
At the Race Meeting - July 1944



Definitely not Randwick



'A' Flight July 1944. Aircrew Photo includes:



Pilots -  
Tom Linley Ron Bullen Bob Lascock Sid Sippe Pat Boyd  
Lee Archer Bill Rinkin Doug Taylor Lloyd Ritchie  
Jack Gibbings  
Navigators -  
Gus Sparke Dave Finlay Harry Moo Murray Broderick  
Col McKenzie  
Fred Anderson Jack Brassil Keith Packham Bob Warner  
Ron Mayne  
Ground Staff includes -  
On Wing left of cockpit -- Ken Ryan  
Front Row seated -- McGill Hopkins Williams  
Second Row extreme right -- Henderson  
Under LH cannon -- Rex Saxelley  
Standing under Nose -- No. 6 Sam Proctor





Christmas Dinner 1943 - Officer's Mess Coomalie Creek



It is reported that this officer asked for a bucket of water. He got it!!



Equipment Office and Store, July, 1944



EQUIPMENT PERSONNEL - JAN. 1944

ACI Harly Cpl Spear Cpl Paddgett LAC Stoddart LAC Smith LAC Williams  
Cpl Bradshaw Sgt Barwick F/Lt Brown LAC Pritchard Cpl Green  
(Photo A. C. Brown)



Sgt Jack Lennard Blue Alcock Blue Cumming  
Gordon Hepsarth Ron Wardlaw (Photos D. Annandale)



Dave Annandale Wally Ford Ron Wardlaw



W/O Bill Finkin F/O Doug Cruickshank  
F/Sgt Ron Mayne Cpl John Sweeny



F/O Ron Bullen Cpl John Sweeny  
LAC Dick Barret 3/9/44



Feed time at Coomalie Creek, 1943  
(Photos courtesy Loma Gurr)





Rex Gardham with EH-C and eagle



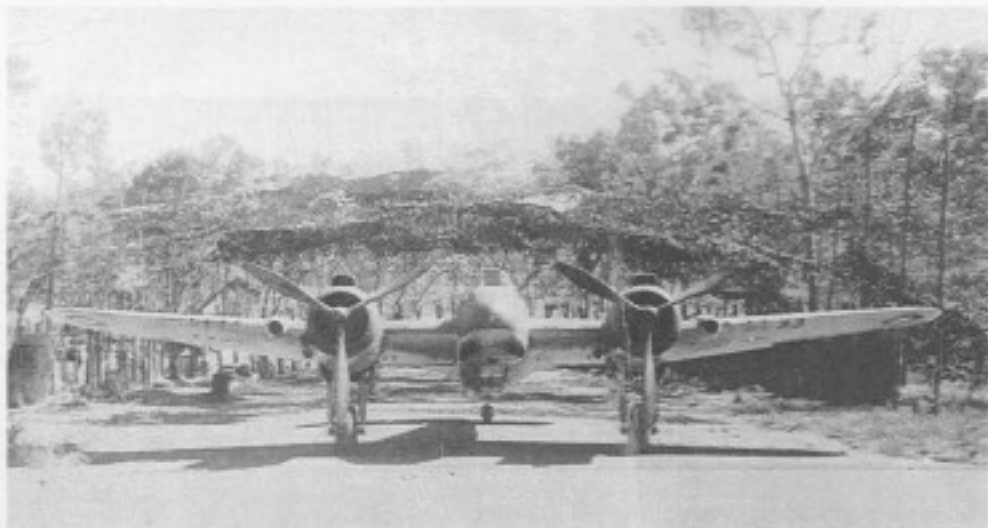
Roy Parnell Jack Gibbings H. Moo Sam Proctor (Photo: R. Parnell)



31 Squadron Hospital.  
The hospital is Richard Luxton's next rebuilding project  
(Phot: Alan Cavanagh)







(Photo R. Bryant)



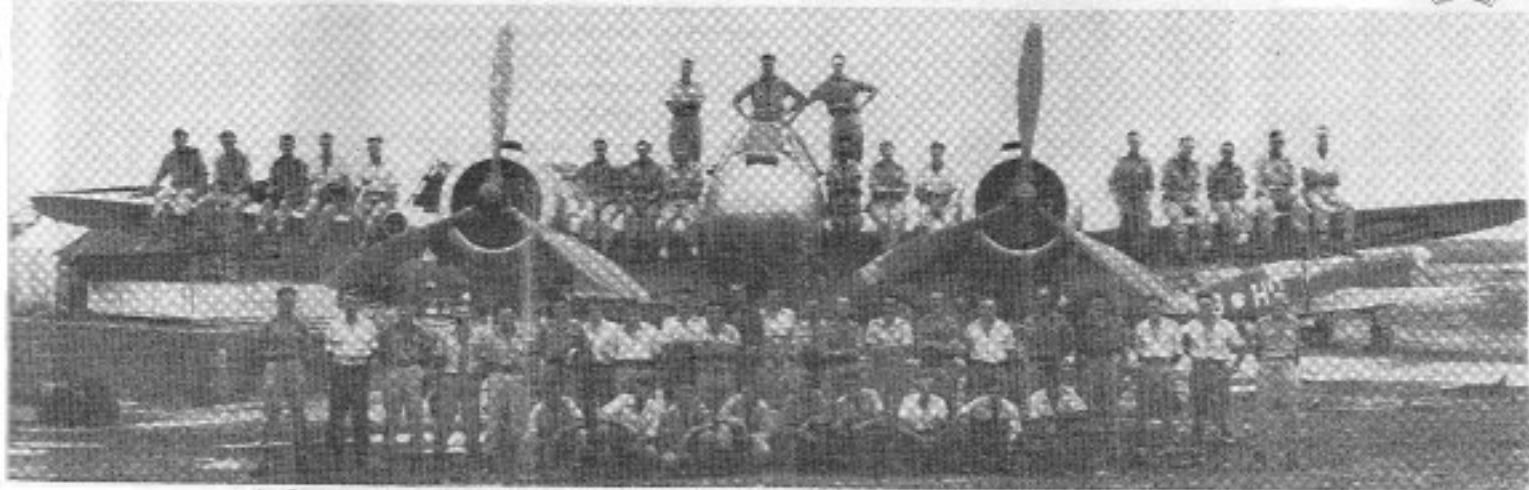
Coomalie Downs Estate. Views along lush valley, good rainfall. Very sound construction, plenty of trees, close to transport. Air conditioned, straight through floor coverings, lino. Two beds. Security - 5MG mounted outside. Reasonably priced O.N.O.



Photographer's Tent (Sleeping)



# THE SILVER BEAU STORY



31 Squadron Maintenance Group in front of A8-196, Tarakan 1945. Seated is FLTLT Frank Stewart, SENGO, and third from right in a crouching position is local AIRTC identity Tom Davies.

In April 1945 the Australian built Beaufighter Mk 21 Serial No. A8-196 was accepted by the RAAF from Dept. of Aircraft Production, and test flown by Production Test and Ferry Unit at 1AD Laverton. The aircraft was then flown to Morotai and delivered to 31 Squadron on 19th June 1945, by a ferry crew.

GPCPT Charles Read who was the CO of 77 (Attack) Wing which comprised 22, 30, and 31 Squadrons, had been flying various Beaufighter aircraft were available from 31 Squadron during April, May and June, accompanied by FLTLT Dave Beasley as Navigator, but now decided that with the imminent transfer of the Wing HQ to Tarakan, to have A8-196 allocated to him for his use in both operations and visits to the Squadrons under his command. Consequently, the above mentioned crew flew the aircraft from Morotai to Tarakan and thus became the first of the larger aircraft to land on the recently constructed Tarakan airstrip.

This proved a most harrowing experience, for although the RAAF Airfield Construction Wing had been working feverishly to reconstruct Tarakan airstrip which

had been abandoned by the Japanese, they had to contend with a multitude of problems. These problems included the removal of land mines on the site and surrounds, very wet and poorly drained terrain, but they had no alternative and despite this and a lack of materials, they constructed an airstrip.

It was an airstrip which tested to the extreme, the capabilities of all pilots attempting to land or take off from it. However, by this

consisting of Jungle Green on the upper surfaces and Sky Blue on the under surfaces and returned to its natural metal colour.

This quite large and tedious operation was carried out by 31 Squadron Maintenance Group under the direction of FLTLT Frank Stewart who co-opted the assistance of any available aircrew personnel. After the paint had been stripped from all surfaces of the aircraft, the metal panels were then polished for two

over 500 kph.

With the impending return to Australia of 77 Wing, Charles Read and Dave Beasley conducted several missions to inspect the airstrips of Labuan, Morotai, and Balikpapan during September 1945. In October A8-196 was flown to Wagga, thence to Richmond where GPCPT Read visited RAAF HQ Eastern Area. At the conclusion of this visit the return flight was undertaken.

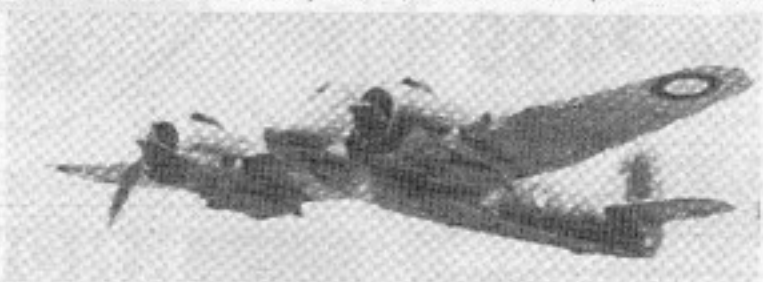
It is interesting to note that where ever A8-196 landed during the trip, it was much admired as it was the only known silver RAAF warplane at that time and soon became affectionately known as the 'SILVER BEAU.'

The final flight of A8-196 was made from Labuan to Melbourne arriving 28th October 1945.

At the conclusion of its ferry back to Australia, the 'Silver Beau' was flown to Wagga in November for storage. A8-196 was scrapped in August 1949.

### Footnote.

This article was produced with the assistance of FLTLT(Ret.) Dave Beasley who had the privilege of being A8-196's navigator for practically the whole of its Squadron Service during WW2.

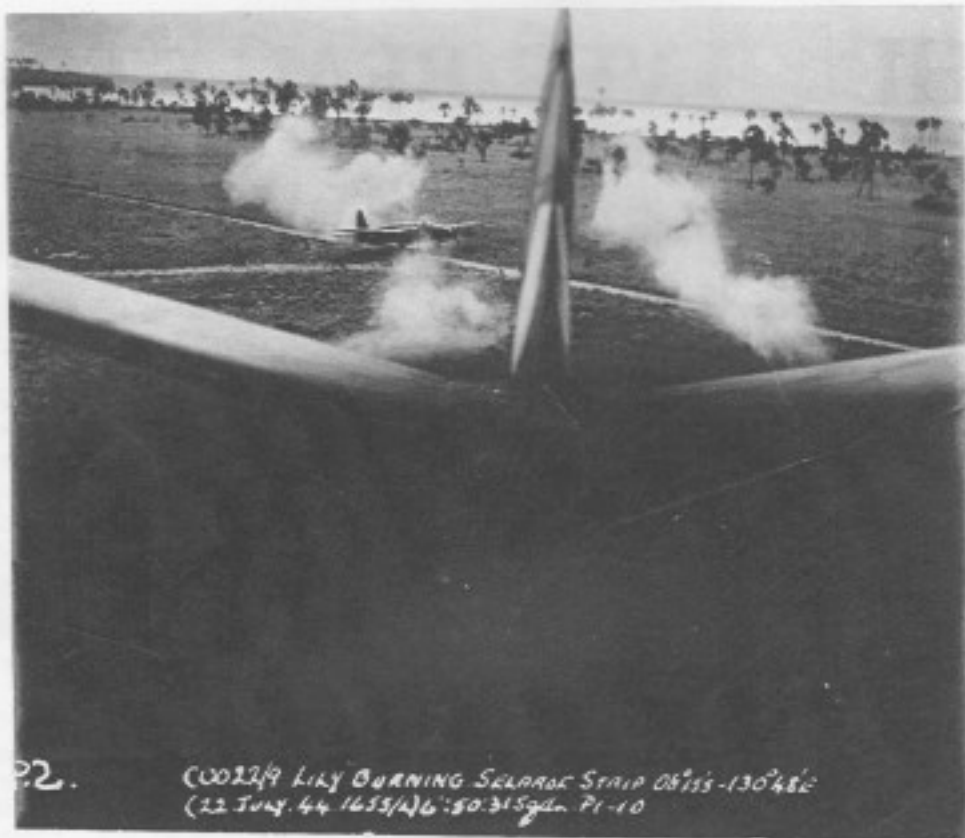


time most Beaufighter pilots were skilled and experienced airmen and very few mishaps occurred.

During July and August various flights to Squadrons and detachments under his command, were undertaken by GPCPT Read with FLTLT Beasley as navigator in A8-196 and then with the war ending it was decided by various members of 31 Squadron and approved by Charles Read that A8-196 would be stripped of the war-time camouflage,

reasons. The first reason was to improve the appearance of the aircraft, the other to increase the airspeed of the aircraft by about ten knots.

The maximum speed of a Beaufighter aircraft at the time was approximately 270 knots at sea level which converts to approx. 310 mph and further equates to 498 kph. Therefore with the paint stripped off and the exposed metal polished the A8-196 was theoretically capable of

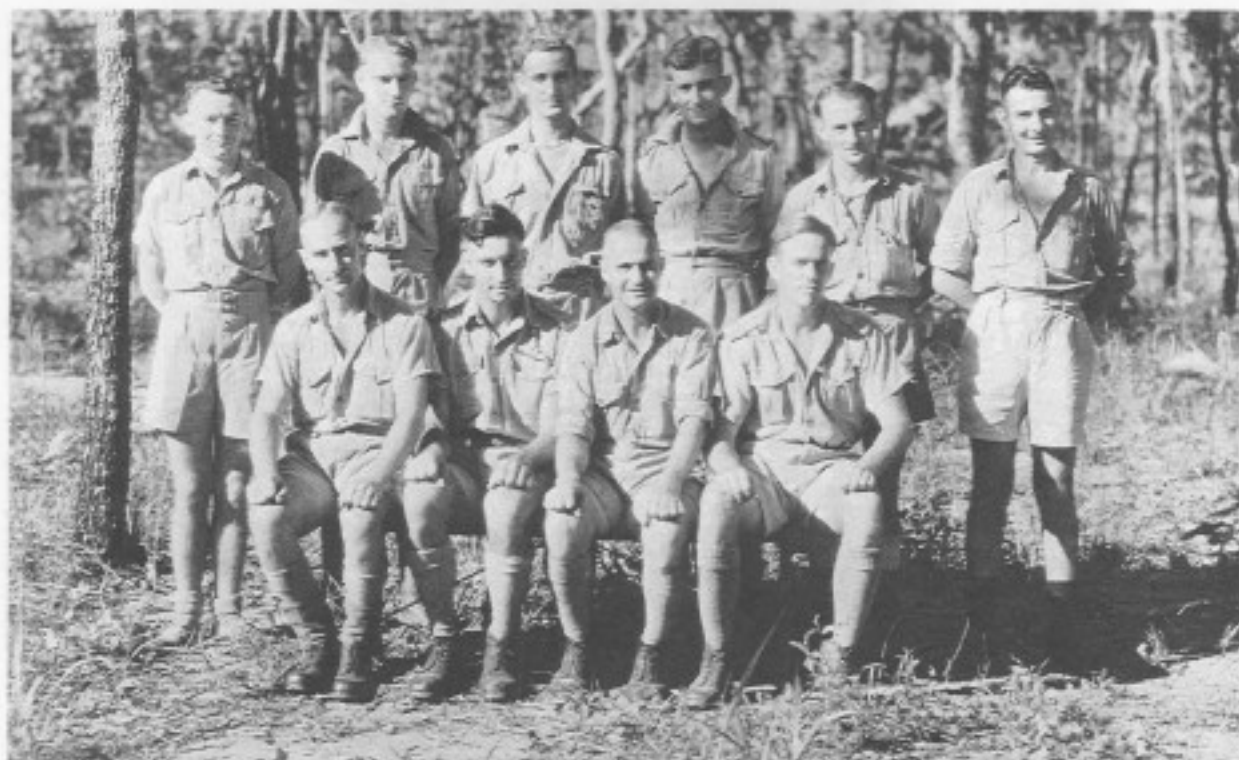




The end of 'Lily'



Another 'HIT'



31 Squadron Cricket Team - Coomalie Creek, 1943 (Photo Bill Dunbar)



31 Squadron Football Team - Coomalie creek, 1943 (Photo Ron Hill)



Cooling off at Oodnadatta



Cooling off at Berri Springs



Pat Delaney Murray Weate . . . Green . . . Cobham



OUCH!!



Murray Weste and John Sweeney



There - is that better /



COWARD SPRINGS HOTEL  
on way to Darwin



JAP RAID SOUVENIR displayed  
by members of a RAAF Beau-  
fighter squadron in North-West-  
ern Australia. Flight-Lieut.  
J. D. Entwistle and Flying-Offi-  
cer B. W. Gillespie are holding  
the bomb.



ANT HILLS - N. T.



(Mac/McGill, Roy Parnell & Tony Hopkins



Roy Parnell at work on A8-14



Group of Ground Staff, Coomalie





Roy Bryan & Tom Wilson



Clive Terdich & Bruce Jones



Harry Moo with friends at Adelaide River - Sept '44

F/Lt Norm Tritton and P/O Ron Leckie in A19-176 flying on sick engine



## Beaufighter's Grim Flight over Sea

There is real drama in the story of a long-range Beaufighter which hopped home 300 miles across the Arafura Sea last week after its port engine had been holed by enemy fire, and the starboard engine failed every five minutes, because of a fuel block.

The plane was damaged during a strafing run over the Aru Islands. As it pulled away an AA shell passed through the port engine and cut it out, with the plane only 800 feet from the ground.

Five minutes out from the island the second engine cut out, when the plane had risen to 2000-ft. It began to lose altitude rapidly, but by shaking the plane violently, the pilot, Flight Lieutenant N. C. Tritton, of Brisbane, cleared the fuel block a few hundred feet from the ocean, and started the engine again.

The same difficulty continued every five minutes for two and a half hours before the Australian coast was sighted. The single motor coughed, spluttered, and emitted a dense cloud of black smoke throughout.

Three planes fell back to protect the crippled machine, but half-way across the Arafura Sea they ran into heavy cumulus cloud and the protecting machines could only trace Tritton's aircraft by the streak of black smoke.

Once the plane, in one of its dives actually skimmed the water.

When it landed there was only sufficient petrol left for five minutes' flying.

Tritton, a civil aviator before the war, has 2000 flying hours to his credit, but this was the first time he had struck engine trouble.



A19-81 crashed on take off - Coomalie Creek, 17-8-43



At Milimiginbi After attack on Doka Barat 7-5-44  
Norm Tritton Cyril Hensen Dave Strachan Ron Leckie  
F/O Quinlan Alan Cobb Sid Green

Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Mar., 1945

WEST AUSTRALIAN BEAUFIGHTER CREW



West Australian members of the crew of a Beaufighter bearing "a smile on the face of the tiger" emblem. The aircraft had returned from a mission over enemy territory. Left to right: Flight-Lt Bob Lo Scock, of Subiaco (pilot), Flight-Sgt J. S. White of Perth (navigator) and Flight-Sgt W. R. McGuigan, of Carnarvon (pilot). (Department of Air Photograph)



A19-117 attacking Floatplanes at Taberfane (12-6-43)

From a painting in oils by Simon Fisher . 1984



Some of 'A' Flight  
(Photo: Gordon Murray)



The backbone of the circus  
(Photo: Bill Cragan)



This Hercules engine was found 1/2 mile from impact site at Bombing Range SW of Pell (Photo Frank Stewart)



Hank Henry and Doug Hooke



Living dangerously (Photo Gordon Murray)



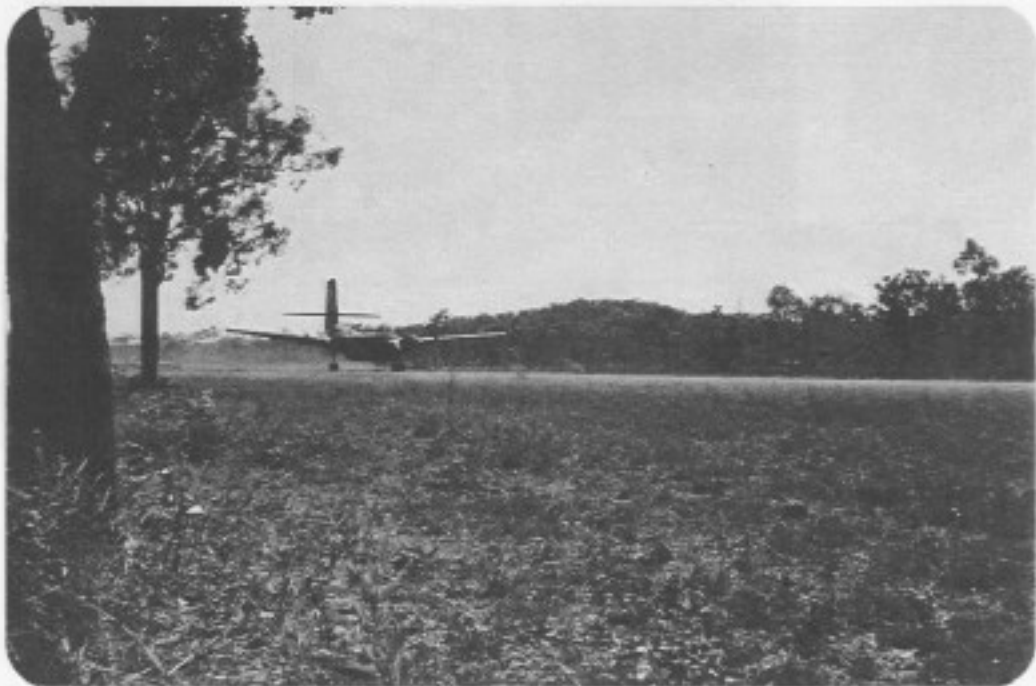


Coomalie Strip before final coat of dark gravel. 1943 (Photo Ian Ezzy)



Group known as 'Peanuts for Babies'. Photo taken just as sealing of Coomalie Strip was completed. (Photo Ian Ezzy)





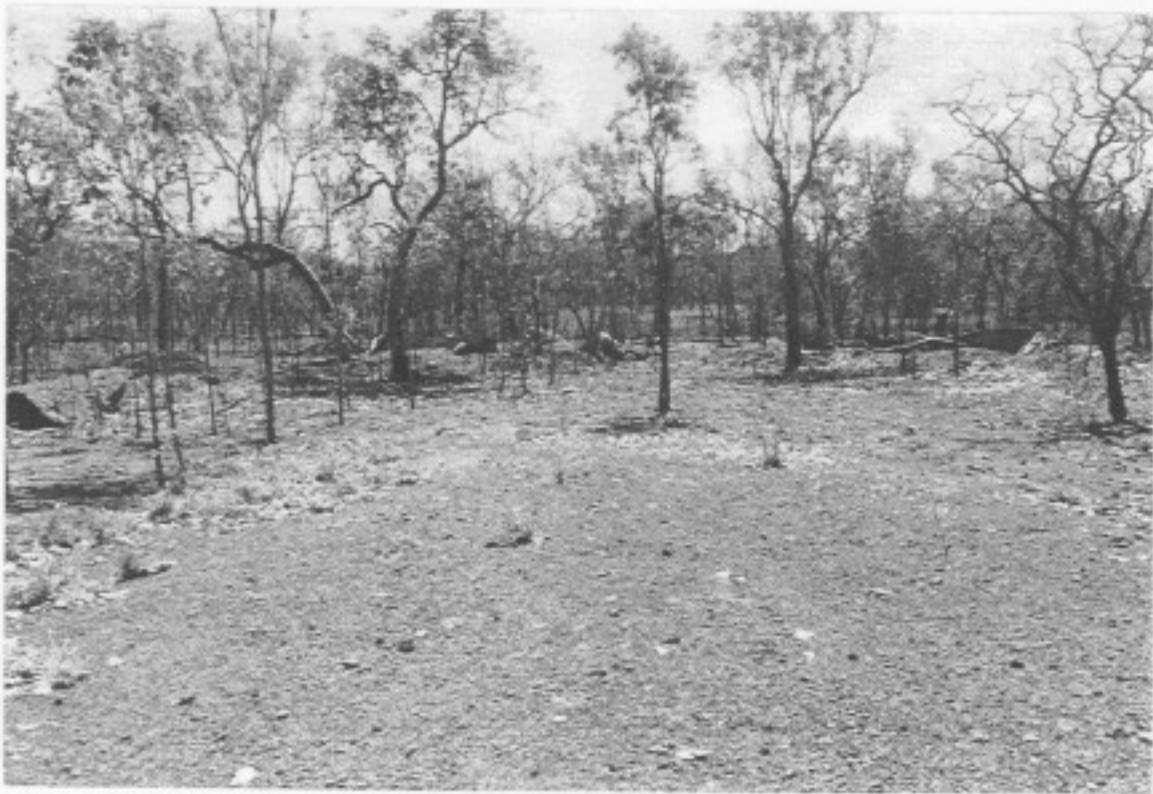
Coomalie Creek airstrip - August, 1984

(Photos: R. Ludan)





Main Road into Camp Area from Strip



Service Section Revealed

(Photos R. Lurton)

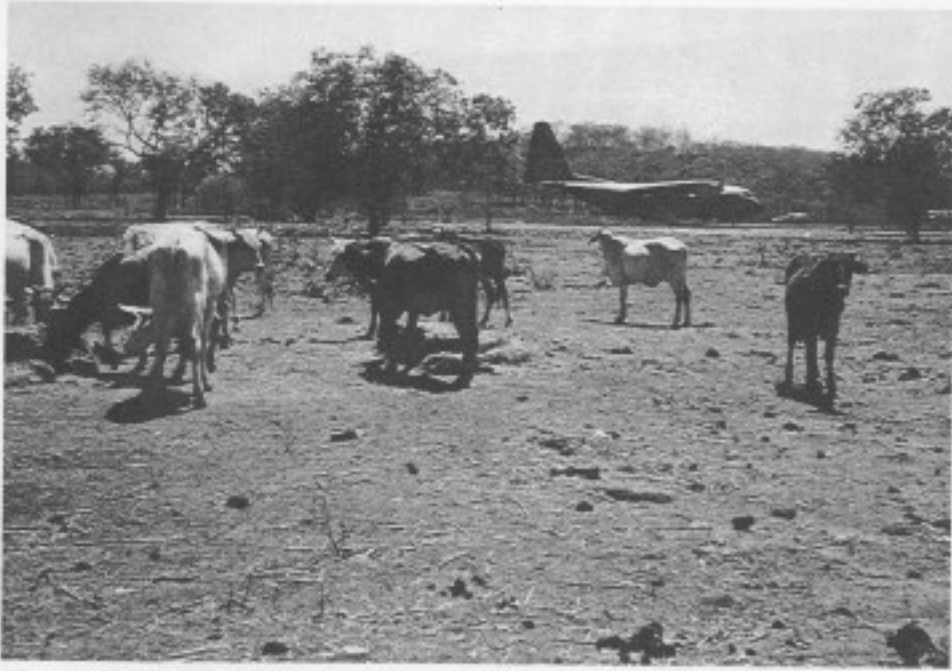


Richard Luxton



Rice crop, Coomalie Farm, April 1986

(Photos R. Luxton)



Hercules on Coomale, September 1986 - piloted by son of Alan Cobb

Photo's taken by Richard Luxton, courtesy Fred Anderson



Cricket pitch on Coomale airstrip, built 1944. Recently uncov

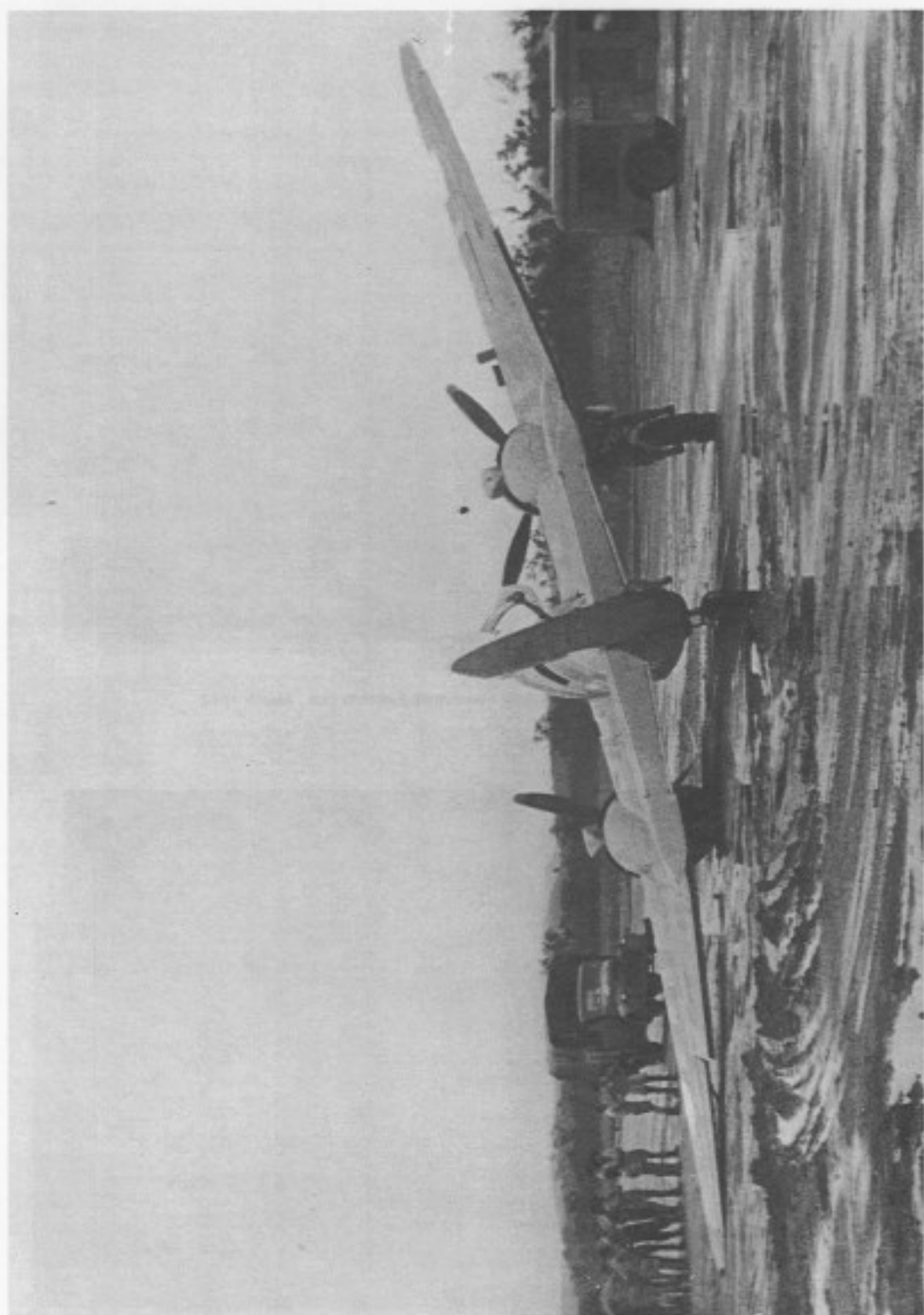


Looking South - Strip in good condition, September 1965



Camp site at Polshot (now Learmonth) Exmouth Gulf, March 1944





A19-88 after engine failure, March 1944 (Photo: Dave Ferrell)



J. Thompson, D. Whitehead and D. Wallace at new Bar in Sergeant's Mess,  
15-2 -44



Sam Proctor with Cecile May