

*Women's Auxiliary Air Force.* During the year the strength of the W.A.A.F. was increased, although recruiting during the last quarter of 1942 dropped considerably owing to the enforced registration of women under the National Service Regulations and the subsequent drafting of large numbers into essential industries. The newly-formed W.A.A.C. and W.R.N.S. also attracted a great many women who would otherwise have volunteered for service in the W.A.A.F.

Training courses have been held during the year and have been very successful. A small draft was posted overseas, and reports indicate that they are carrying out their work and standing up to the changed conditions very well indeed.

*Medical Branch.* The large expansion in R.N.Z.A.F. personnel has involved heavy burdens on the Medical Branch, but the general health of air personnel has been maintained at a high standard.

*Dental Service.* Full dental treatment is rendered to all members of the R.N.Z.A.F., to full-time members of the Air Training Corps, and to members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. All such personnel are dentally examined on entry and any necessary treatment carried out promptly so that all ranks are rendered dentally fit as soon as possible after entry. Regular re-examinations and treatments are also carried out to ensure that this fitness is maintained.

*Operations.* (a) *New Zealand:* The past year has seen the formation of many new squadrons in New Zealand for the defence of the Dominion against invasion and raiding activities and for the protection of shipping. By carrying out patrols and searches to seaward from the New Zealand coasts, bomber reconnaissance squadrons continue to play an unspectacular but important part in the defence of the Dominion. These patrols, somewhat dull and tedious and yielding little of the satisfaction that comes from contact with the enemy, are yet recognized as essential by the squadron personnel as valuable training for the more active operations in which they may later be engaged in forward areas.

(b) *Pacific Area:* New Zealand bomber and fighter squadrons have been sent to many parts of the Pacific, and to-day New-Zealanders are serving actively in increasing strength along the South Pacific battle front, the key to the Dominion's security. These New Zealand squadrons have been engaged on the important work of patrolling sea routes and providing anti-submarine patrol to vessels arriving and departing at the various ports, but during the latter part of the year our airmen have been engaged in active operations against the Japanese in the Solomons, where their work has met with most favourable comment from the Allied Commanders in that area.

*Works and Buildings.*—A large programme of work has been carried out during the year, both in construction and extension of aerodromes and also in the erection of accommodation and technical facilities. The maintenance of buildings and aerodromes was taken over from the Public Works Department, many of the personnel formerly employed by that Department being enlisted into the R.N.Z.A.F. for this work. Nos. 1 and 2 Aerodrome Construction Squadrons have now returned to New Zealand after carrying out construction programmes overseas.

*Aircraft and Equipment.*—(a) *Equipment:* The formation of additional operational units, the increased number of aircraft in service, and the expansion in personnel strength have necessitated large increases in all classes of equipment, both from overseas and local sources.

(b) *Unit Changes:* A number of new units have been formed and equipped, and new stores depots have been established to provide for the increased quantities of equipment received.

(c) *General Supply Position:* The incorporation of the R.N.Z.A.F. within the command of the Commanding Officer, South Pacific Area, has resulted in certain changes in the channel of supply. In general, supplies have been satisfactorily maintained.

(d) *Inspectorate of Equipment:* During the year an Inspectorate of Equipment was formed to further ensure that all equipment is maintained at an efficient standard and that correct stores administration procedure is followed.

*Maintenance.*—The formation of new units, combined with the marked increase in flying hours at both training and operational units, has greatly increased the work of the Maintenance Branch. A centralized maintenance scheme now covers all units, and new repair depots have been established. Small numbers of personnel have undergone overseas specialist courses, which have proved of inestimable value in carrying out maintenance work in this country. Assistance has also been given to the United States Forces by the overhaul of engines in R.N.Z.A.F. repair depots.

*Aeronautical Production.*—A substantial increase in local production has been effected and has materially helped to overcome shortages of certain spare parts for airframes and engines. During the year an extended scheme for the reclamation and salvage of repairable equipment has been put into operation. It is desired to record the co-operation received from local manufacturers, which has again been of the greatest assistance to the Service.

*Signals.* *Communications:* The organization and scope of the R.N.Z.A.F. have been expanded to provide point-to-point and ground-to-air communication for operational requirements, both in the Dominion and in forward areas. Wireless communication with Air Ministry and Air Force Headquarters, Canada, Middle East, and India has been constantly maintained, and a large increase in the amount of traffic on these channels has been successfully handled. The control of certain civil aeradio stations has been taken over by the R.N.Z.A.F. and the operating personnel enlisted.

*Radio Navigational Aids:* Standard beam approach installations have been made at certain strategic R.N.Z.A.F. aerodromes to assist aircraft in approaching and landing under adverse weather conditions. Radio direction-finding stations have also been erected to meet the needs of the large increase in operational flying.

*Radio Location:* An air warning radio location system has been established.

*Meteorological.*—The Meteorological Branch of the R.N.Z.A.F. is responsible for all meteorological requirements of the three armed Services and of the civil population. With the exception of three radio operators seconded from the Post and Telegraph Department and a few female assistants, the