

Through educational progress sheets and cards, which follow Air personnel from station to station, a complete record is kept of the courses of study satisfactorily completed. Air Force personnel will, on application on discharge, be given a Royal New Zealand Air Force Educational Certificate setting out the progress made. These certificates should prove of considerable value in connection with rehabilitation.

Air Training Corps.—The Air Training Corps has doubled its strength since March, 1942. Training efficiency has been greatly improved as the result of increased supplies of equipment and the appointment of a staff of instructors, many of whom have returned from operational experience abroad. The introduction of the Mobile Instructional Unit and the Air Training Corps Touring Flight has created much additional interest in the A.T.C., from which come most of the new recruits for the R.N.Z.A.F.

Women's Auxiliary Air Force.—The Women's Auxiliary Air Force has continued to play an important part in the work of the R.N.Z.A.F., with airwomen efficiently performing their duties in all of the trades in which they have been employed.

Medical Branch.—The service ceased to be a branch of the New Zealand Medical Corps in April, 1943, and was incorporated in the R.N.Z.A.F. Due to the limited number of professional and fully-trained staff available, the staff has been working under pressure. Although the expansion of the R.N.Z.A.F. in the Pacific area has presented many new medical problems, the general health has been maintained at a high standard.

Dental Services.—As in past years, the dental aspect of Service personnel has been carefully maintained.

Operations.—The past year has witnessed not only a considerable expansion in the number of operational squadrons, but has also satisfactorily demonstrated in the South Pacific area the standard of training achieved by the R.N.Z.A.F.

A year ago the R.N.Z.A.F. was still in the process of passing from a defensive to an offensive role. The successes attained by Admiral Halsey and his Forces in the Solomons area during 1943 enabled the bulk of R.N.Z.A.F. squadrons to be sent overseas, where they have played a worthy part in the recapture of the Solomon Islands and in sweeping Japanese aircraft from Rabaul.

The R.N.Z.A.F. Pacific Ferry has flown a large number of service aircraft from Honolulu to New Zealand without loss or mishap.

The formation of a transport organization to convey air and ground personnel, together with urgently-required equipment, to and from the forward area has proved an outstanding success.

Works and Buildings.—Works activities have been mainly concerned in three new phases: (i) the replanning of stations and camps to implement the policy of segregating all training in the South Island, (ii) replanning of stations and camps under the new conditions following the recession of the threat of invasion, and (iii) the expansion of the R.N.Z.A.F. in the Pacific area.

Equipment.—The year has again been one of continuous expansion, involving the formation and equipping of a number of new squadrons to operate in the Pacific area. With the exception of a few items, such as machine and hand tools, the supply position has been satisfactory.

Operational and training aircraft allocated to the R.N.Z.A.F. during 1943 were delivered, with minor exceptions, which are being released during 1944.

The policy of placing local contracts has been followed, and although the change-over to the American supply system reduced the demands on Dominion manufacturers, there is still a considerable volume of work being placed with local contractors.

Difficulty continues to be experienced in securing the requirements of clothing from local manufacturers.

Maintenance.—In New Zealand the standard of repair and maintenance has been kept at a high standard, and the technical services in the Pacific area have been improved by the formation of a Forward Repair Depot handling combat damage and major inspection work.

Supply.—The installation of bulk fuel depots near stations, together with the use of water transport in some areas, has assisted in maintaining an efficient supply system with the least drain on man-power.

Vegetable gardens on R.N.Z.A.F. stations have been reduced during the year.

Catering officers have been established on larger stations, thus improving the standard of messing and messing administration.

An increase in flying-boat commitments has resulted in the provision of additional marine craft facilities.

Aeronautical Production.—Local manufacture of a wide range of miscellaneous items of aeronautical, electrical, and ground equipment was necessary throughout the year. The production and repair of training-type aircraft, wooden propellers, aircraft tires, and types of aircraft accumulators continue as before.

The overhaul and repair of training type and communication aircraft, and the reconditioning of engines and wooden propellers, is still carried out by private contracts.

Signals.—The changed strategic situation in the South Pacific area has had considerable effect on the Signals organization. Whereas in 1942 it was necessary to plan communications required for the defence of the Dominion, the removal of the threat of enemy action against this country and the consequent despatch of operational units to the forward area have necessitated an extensive revision of Signals planning.

Meteorological.—The Meteorological Branch continues to meet requirements for the three Armed Services and for the civilian population.

Band of the R.N.Z.A.F.—The Band of the R.N.Z.A.F. has spent a considerable time on Air Force stations, providing entertainment to Service personnel and assisting in campaigns for recruiting, National Patriotic Funds, and war loans.

Public Relations.—Recruiting campaigns for the Royal New Zealand Air Force, Air Training Corps, and the Women's Auxiliary Air Force were inaugurated and carried out by the Directorate of Public Relations, which is also responsible for the handling of casualty reports affecting New Zealand air personnel.

Conclusion.—I desire to express my thanks and appreciation to all members of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and to the civilian staff for their efforts during the past year.

I have, &c.,

L. M. ISITT, Air Vice-Marshal,
Chief of the Air Staff.