

AIR TRAINING CORPS

The Air Training Corps is a valuable auxiliary to the Regular and Territorial Air Force and will prove an excellent source of recruiting.

The strength of the Air Training Corps during 1946 decreased from 5,862 Cadets at the 1st April, 1946 to 5,170 at the 31st March, 1947. This latter number was made up of 1,873 town unit Cadets and 3,297 school unit Cadets.

During the period under review some 756 Cadets were mobilized into the Interim Air Force, and further 68 made application for service in the Regular Air Force. The decrease in the Air Training Corps strength was largely due to this recruitment into the Service, which, for ground crew, was on a much larger scale than during any previous year of operation.

Accommodation problems during the period have been largely overcome by the co-operation of the Army Department, which has offered the part use of certain drill-halls. The number so occupied is now twenty-three. Twenty-two school and town units have been disbanded and appreciable reductions in staff effected.

Ample supplies of instructional equipment have been available during the past twelve months, and this should continue.

In addition to the forty parades held by each unit during the year, all Cadets had the opportunity of carrying out further practical training at summer camps. A reasonable standard of qualification was achieved by the majority of Cadets.

EQUIPMENT

At the end of the war the Air Force was equipped with a large variety and number of British and United States aircraft, most of which were obsolete and incapable of further flying through lack of spares and maintenance capacity. It is hoped that the available Catalinas and Dakotas, with their associated spares and equipment, will be adequate to maintain a small flying-boat unit and a transport squadron during the interim period. Sufficient and satisfactory training types—namely, Tiger Moths, Harvards, and Oxfords—are also available for flying training requirements during this period. The lack of any United States operational types which could be maintained and the desirability of reverting to British aircraft for this role made it necessary to discuss with Air Ministry the supply of a suitable type for the equipment of the Air Force during the interim period, and pending the availability of proved post-war types. As a result, a total of 80 Mosquito F/B Mk. VI were obtained at greatly reduced rates, and these are now arriving in New Zealand.

At the beginning of the year the Air Force held in the Dominion a total of 1,330 aircraft, of which 577 were United States combat type obtained on lease-lend. Thirteen transport aircraft, comprising 6 Dominies, 6 Lodestars, and 1 Dakota, were transferred to the New Zealand National Airways Corporation and 73 Tiger Moths and 20 miscellaneous civil-type aircraft were sold to aero clubs and private owners. Additional Dakota aircraft are in process of transfer to New Zealand National Airways Corporation. The sale of non-combat-type aircraft realized the sum of £33,458. A total of 496 United States combat-type aircraft and 230 training aircraft, Tiger Moths and Oxfords, have been declared to the War Assets Realization Board as surplus. Every effort has been made by the Air Force and the War Assets Realization Board to explore the outlet for such items with a view to early disposal, but to date no satisfactory arrangements have been made. The Air Force still retains the custody of some 700 surplus aircraft of varying types which, although they had an original capital value of over £20,000,000, have a negligible disposal value.

At the termination of hostilities, Air Force equipment and spares occupied nearly 500,000 square feet of floor space at stores depots. The equipment staff has necessarily been responsible for the classification and survey of this equipment, the declaration of surpluses to War Assets Realization Board, and the subsequent custody and disposal of this equipment. This task has proved a heavy strain on a depleted equipment staff and has prejudiced the resumption of normal Service activities. Of general stores and