

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

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Help put the Q back into QVAG/AFM

The Q in QVAG stands for the Queensland. In past years having a home base at Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield in past years made it just was too easy to simply hold events at that Watts. In retrospect that was not what was needed to keep the group healthy we needed to cater for our members who operate from other airfields.

Most of QVAG's members are not based at Watts and many want fly-ins and fly-aways at other airfields than Watts Bridge. In recognition of that the committee has scheduled a number of grass roots fly-ins at a variety of airfields.

Members can do their bit by supporting the fly-ins if they are in your general area. Remember these are meant to be small, simple fly-ins where the emphasis is on a friendly chatty atmosphere rather than on a large attendance.

Finally we are looking for venues to hold grass roots fly-ins in 2017 so if you are prepared to host an event at your airfields (or ALA) please contact me via president@qvag.org and I will get back to you.

oOo

QVAG/AFM has a Vice-President – Steve Newing

The QVAG/AFM vice-president's position has been vacant since the last AGM. Previously it had been occupied for many years by Craig Thomsen and we would like to thank Craig for all his years of sterling service to QVAG/AFM.

The new VP is Steve Newing. Steve is a pilot and vintage aeroplane restorer. Steve has like a number of us had a life-long passion for old aeroplanes and restoring them.

Some with a good memory will remember that Steve gave a presentation on Rotec Radials at a QVAG seminar held last year in the QVAG building.

Recently he completed the restoration of his Fairchild 24 (VH=CMB). Steve is currently working on his Great Lakes 2T-A1Biplane (VH-UYB) and hopes to have the aeroplane ready to fly later this year.



Image Above: Fairchild 24 VH-CMB belonging to Steve Newing



Image Above: A Great Lakes Biplane

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A Bit of History – Queensland's only Chief Air Marshall



McNAMARA, Sir Neville Patrick, KBE 1981 (CBE 1972), AO 1976 AFC 1961; b.17 Apr. 1923 Warwick, Qld; educ. Toogoolawah State Sch and Christian Bros. Coll., Nudgee, Qld; joined RAAF 1941, grad. as Sgt pilot 1942 and served with 75 Sqn New Guinea and 77 Sqn Morotai; comm. 1944; served in Japan with 82 Sqn and 481 Maint. Sqn, and 111 Mobile Fighter Control Unit 1947-48; Air Traffic Control duties, HQ NE Area 1949; Flying Instr CFTS 1951-53; 91 Wg Japan 1953 (and subsequently 77 Sqn in Korea); Pilot Trg Offr, HQ Trg Comd 1954-55; Staff Offr Fighter Ops, Dept. of Air 1955-56; grad. RAAF Staff Coll. 1956; CO 25 Sqn Pearce, WA, 1957-58; course at RAF Flying Coll. 1959; CO 2 OCU 1959-60; attended Joint Services Staff Coll. UK 1960, then was CO & SASO RAAF Staff London 1961-64; staff duties in Directorate of Pers. from 1963, then Dir. Personnel (Offrs) 1964-66; OC RAAF Contingent Thailand and CO Base Sqn Ubon 1966-67; Air Staff Offr RAAF Richmond, NSW, 1967-68; Dir-Gen. Organisation 1969-71; Comdr RAAF Forces Vietnam 1971-72; Air Attache Washington 1972-75; DCAS 1975-79; CAS 1979-82; CDFS 1982-84 (retd.)

Source: <http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/Contents/About-APDC/About-APDC/Office-of-Air-Force-History/Air-Chief-Marshals/132/Air-Chief-Marshals.aspx>

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Royal Queensland Aero Club

I am sure that many members were as shocked as I was when I heard on the radio that Royal Queensland Aero Club was placed in the hands of an administrator and that it had ceased trading.

The following missive was sent to RQAC members:

"24 March 2016

Note to Members – Appointment of Voluntary Administrator

Dear Members

I regret to advise that the Boards of Royal Queensland Aero Club Limited, Airline Academy of Australia Pty Ltd and ATAE Pty Ltd resolved earlier today to appoint a Voluntary Administrator to all entities within the Royal Queensland Aero Club structure. As a consequence of this appointment all entities ceased trading with effect from this afternoon.

This outcome is particularly disappointing given the substantial progress recently made towards achieving increased scale and profitability.

I would like to take this opportunity to record my and the Board's appreciation of the wonderful efforts of Management and Staff, particularly through the many challenges that have arisen in recent months.

The Voluntary Administrator, Nigel Markey of Pilot Partners, has commenced the process of reviewing the position of the RQAC group and will provide advice to Directors, Creditors and Members and Students in the coming weeks.

Obviously this is an incredibly sad day for our proud and historic organisation. There will be a number of people working tirelessly in the coming days to explore all avenue and options to develop a proposal that will allow the entities to emerge

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from Voluntary Administration.

Members will be kept informed throughout the process.

Yours sincerely

Clif Hefner

There is a fair degree of interest by QVAG/AFM members in what's happening with RQAC because it has been there for so long and trained so many pilots.

Member Warwick Henry in a recent report gave us some good news with regards to RQAC and that is that it now seems likely that RQAC and its subsidiaries AAA and ATAE are going to be resurrected". Let's hope that happens because RQAC is such a great and historic aero club!

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Lockheed Electra Junior “Silver City” VH-ABH

VH-ABH is another notable aeroplane in the aviation history of Australia. “Silver City” currently belongs to members Ross and Peggy Smith of Rolleston, Central Queensland. They have owned the aeroplane for a number of years after purchasing it at the auction following the break-up of the Air World collection at Wangaratta. Ross and Peggy assumed ownership of the aeroplane in July 2003.

Ross absolutely loves flying this aeroplane and both he and Peggy are very proud that they are the current custodians of this important part of Australia’s history.

The history of the aeroplane is as follows:

The aeroplane was handed over to Broken Hill Associated Smelters Pty Ltd on 10 September 1937. Subsequently it was shipped to Port Melbourne, Australia aboard the “Momba” and upon arrival was trucked to Essendon Airport for assembly by Ansett Airways. In November 1937 the aeroplane entered service operating from Essendon and was used to fly BHP Officials to Newcastle. The chief pilot was Pat Hall.

At the end of April 1942 as a result of wartime congestion at Essendon, an agreement was reached whereby VH-ABH would be based at a new airstrip at Tullamarine, Melbourne.



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By this time, VH-ABH had been painted in camouflage although the aeroplane had escaped military impressment because it was deemed essential to the war effort. In 1943 the camouflage was removed.



After service with BHP the aeroplane had a succession of owners/operators. In 1957 the aeroplane was sold to Carsair Air Service (PNG) Pty Ltd for use as a freighter in New Guinea and Northern Australia. In March 1960 the aeroplane was with Doug Muir and Muir Aviation at Darwin NT. Its registration was changed to VH-DMC.



In April 1962 the aeroplane was acquired by South Australian Air Taxis Ltd and ferried to Adelaide, SA and the registration changed to VH-TLX. In October 1962 its starboard undercarriage collapsed on landing at Pelican Waterhole SA. Due to the remoteness of the location the aeroplane was deemed a write off and abandoned.

A good aeroplane cannot be kept down for long and in January 1963 the aeroplane was repaired for flight and ferried to Moorabbin, Vic having been acquired by Allan Rae of Air Surveys Australia, and the registration was changed to VH-ASV.

In 1965 the aeroplane was traded in to Masling Aircraft Sales and Service, Cootamundra with 7,827 hours on the airframe. Its use now became general charter work until it was cancelled from the register in January 1966. Not long after, it was struck by a Cessna 172 (VH-CAN) causing minor damage. After repair and overhaul in November 1966 it was back on the register, belonging to Business Aviation Australia Pty Ltd. In June 1967 it was sold to Coronet Cars Pty Ltd and shortly after to Australian Aircraft Sales (ACT) Pty Ltd.

In Jan 1972 its owner became Camarney Pastoral Co Pty Ltd (Dr. Tony Fisher), in July 1975 the owner became John Love. John operated the aircraft in bare metal but the registration was still VH-ASV and in June 1978 John has it reregistered as VH-ABH by which time it was back into its original livery as "Silver City".

June 1985 and the aeroplane again changed owners this time to Airworld museum at Wangaratta, Victoria where it was put on display for the next 19 years until July 2004 when it was purchased by Ross and Peggy Smith.

Having not flown meant that the aeroplane needed a thorough overhaul. The overhaul included two newly overhauled engines and propellers as well as the undercarriage/landing gear. In December 2004 it was back in the air after a number of successful test flights.

Today (2016) the aircraft is still owned by Ross and Peggy, fully maintained in flying condition and occasionally flown. The image below was taken in November 2015 and shows the "Silver City" in

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Ross And Peggy's hangar at Rolleston where the aeroplane shares the hangar with a number of other vintage aeroplanes owned by Ross and Peggy.



We would like to acknowledge the sources of information that we used in developing this article:

<http://www.adastron.com/lockheed/default.htm>

<http://www.edcoatescollection.com/ac1/austa/VH-ABH.html>

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Operation “Red Thunder” - A Great Success.

Red Thunder is a great idea that has been developed into a very successful four day event by hard work and good promotion. Its objective is to bring together owners and pilots of Yak and Nanchang aeroplanes together to undergo piloting skills enhancement in a fun way. The objective is to provide an opportunity for the owners of the YAKs and Nanchang to experience their aircraft the way they were meant to be flown.



Image Above: Flight crews receive a briefing before exercise POEHALI – image by Ross Stenhouse

The Exercise Red Thunder event is run by the Red Radial Squadron. The first three days of the event are training and revision days leading up to day four. Day four is the day when the skills learnt are put into practice in exercise POEHALI.

The Red Thunder brings together the experience of former and current Military pilots offering Warbird owners a snapshot of combat type operations. The flying activities are well supervised, facilitating a safe environment for continuation training of both ab-initio and proficient pilots in the areas of:

- Close Formation,
- Tactical Formation,
- Max Performance Handling, and
- Combat Manoeuvring.

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Image above: Part of the aircraft line-up – image by Ross Stenhouse

What impresses me is the training provided during Red Thunder. It is demanding on the participants; and it is that it is well run by professional pilots and the well documented is superb.

At Red Thunder the participants work extremely hard at achieving the competencies required for the events final day: “Exercise Red Thunder”.

The aircraft used are “Eastern Block” and that underpins the nature of the event – It has a distinct Russian flavour both in the flying and social events.

The Saturday night is a “Squadron Dining In Night”. All the attendees get dressed up in Red Army officers uniforms and their partners dress up as Natashas.



Image Above: From Red Thunder Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/redthunder01/> - Photographer not known.

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What attracts Red Thunder to Watts Bridge?

Two major things attract Red Radial Squadron to Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield:

- The quality of the Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield;
- The low number of houses in the area in the general vicinity of the airfield;
- The existence of a number of suitable target airfields suitable for Red Radials Operations;
- the ambiance of the QVAG building;
- And Avgas refuelling facilities available at the airfield.

QVAG/AFM's Involvement

QVAG's involvement was somewhat limited in that this was not of our events. We have about 5 members who are also members of the Red Radial Squadron; however we did provide the use of the QVAG building and facilities to the Red Radial Squadron for the four days of the event and on the morning of the fifth day (departure day) QVAG provided a farewell breakfast for the departing crews.

Member Tom Fisher used the event to indulge his hobby of aviation photography. So keen was Tom that he camped out at Watts Bridge for four nights so that he could provide a photographic record of the Red Thunder.



Image above: QVAG Treasurer Phil Ridley was the chef extraordinaire for the farewell breakfast assisted by QVAG Membership Officer Jan Stenhouse – image by Ross Stenhouse

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Years back prior to the QVAG building being bought to Watts Bridge in the application for a building permit to the Esk Shire Council we listed as one of the uses of the building as “conducting pilot’s briefings for display flights of vintage aeroplanes”. Seeing the way that Red Thunder develop over the past three years events is very pleasing to me personally.

The surrounding Community

With the influx of over 60 people all wanting accommodation for the duration of Red Thunder all the hotels and motels in the area were fully booked. The Exchange Hotel did good business providing food to the participants including sending a staff member to the airfield to cook food using the QVAG facilities.



Image above: Early morning image of the aircraft line-up on the Sunday – image by Ross Stenhouse

Finally.....

This is a most unusual event and has the potential to cause organisers of flying events to have a deep think on how the basic formula of a fly-in can be enhanced to include some similar functions as Red Thunder.

Being the owner of a Tiger Moth I feel that there is latitude there to develop an event with an appropriate theme focusing the ancestry of the aircraft, after all YAK52’s and Nanchang’s were military training aeroplanes as were Tiger Moths.

If you are interested in developing an event with a focus on Tiger Moths, please contact me at rossjanstenhouse@hotmail.com

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Image Above: Nice shot of the taxi out to runway 12 for the formation flight – image by Tom Fisher



Image above: Tom Fisher has nicely captured part of the massed formation fly-over in this image. This type of shot is more difficult than it looks.



Image left: Another nice image taken by Tom Fisher. This is VH-YGR belonging to Ross Dickson of Cooroy, Queensland. YGR is a S.C. Aerostar S.A YAK 52TW.

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Former RAAF base at Lowood, Queensland

Compiled by Ross Stenhouse

Lowood is a small town located about 20km North West of Amberley RAAF base. Now pretty well almost all traces of this once important RAAF base have gone, however during WW2 this was a vital RAAF base in S.E. Queensland.

I thought that it would be interesting to explore the history of this once major RAAF airfield that was located so close to Brisbane and at the end of WW2 could have been the RAAF's base in S.E. Queensland in place of Amberley.

The airfield was bounded by Forest Hill-Fernvale Road, Coominya Connection Road, Mount Tarampa Road and McCarthy Road, while dispersal taxiways and 9 dive bomber hideouts were located north of Pakleppa Lane and around a circuit between Mount Tarampa road and Watsons Road. Another taxiway circuit linked both ends of the runway to the tarmac area next to four Bellman hangars at the southwest side of the airfield. Some sections of taxiway and most of the runway are now used as roads, while unused sections of the runway and taxiways are still visible. The concrete slabs of the four Bellman hangars and some camp buildings are also visible on aerials, as are the sites of bomb dumps on the west side of Mount Tarampa.

A semi-underground reinforced concrete Operations building was sited on the north slope of Mount Tarampa overlooking the airfield from the south, and a Wireless Telegraphy (W/T) Transmitting building of similar construction was built east of the airfield, to the west of the intersection of Rifle Range Road and Forest Hill-Fernvale Road.

Lowood WW2 History

At the outbreak of World War II in 1939 urgent consideration was given not only to the construction of aeroplanes, but also to the training of technicians, pilots and aircrew. The Empire Training Scheme (EATS) was set up in late 1939 and was an agreement between Britain and the Dominions, particularly Canada, Australia and New Zealand, for aircrews to be trained in those countries for service with the Royal Air Force. The EATS scheme was conducted through 49 airfields in Australia, Queensland having EATS units at Amberley, Archerfield, Bundaberg, Kingaroy, Lowood, Maryborough and Sandgate.¹

The Queensland Main Roads Commission (MRC) commenced construction at Lowood in September 1941, after a decision to have No. 12 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) move to Lowood from Bundaberg. Relief Landing Grounds (RLGs) were also approved at Wivenhoe and Coominya (the latter, also known as A-4, was located southeast of Coominya). The camp area was located at the southwest side of Lowood airfield, and the barracks were located south of four Bellman hangers.

¹ Queensland WW2 Historic Places <http://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/places/?id=870>

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Estimated costs for buildings and services at Lowood were 130,550 pounds. The estimated costs for Wivenhoe and Coominya were 8,700 pounds.

In January 1942 12 EFTS moved to Lowood, which at that time was a grass airfield with incomplete hangars, and heavy storms damaged numerous Tiger Moths several weeks later. In February 1942 alterations were made to some huts to accommodate members of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF). That same month a number of US aircraft dispersed to Lowood after a false alarm about an unidentified aircraft carrier being sighted off Moreton Island (it was the US's first aircraft carrier, the converted collier USS Langley).

By April 12 EFTS had to move, and by 20 May 1942 it was reported that the airfield had been taken over by the Americans. However, the new residents were unhappy with the field and during May the US requested a new airstrip; as a result one was built west of Coominya (Coominya No. 2, or A-6).

With the advent of Japan into the war and the influx of American services it became necessary for Lowood to become an operational base and No. 12 EFTS was split up and absorbed by two other training schools.

In 1942 the facility was upgraded to an operational base and intelligence centre to monitor and prevent Japanese activities in the region.

The Americans move in

In March 1942 USAAF 36th and 80th Fighter Squadrons with their P-39 Airacobras were deployed via Amberley to Lowood. US Army 101st Coastal Artillery Battalion and 94th Coastal Artillery Regiment provided anti-aircraft protection with machine gun batteries and searchlights.

Apparently Lowood's single unpaved runway and limited facilities did not suit the Americans. The airfield was visible from a considerable distance, with few options to hide or disperse aircraft in the event of an attack. By May 36 Squadron had transferred to Anthill Plains (Townsville) and 80th Squadron to Petrie (Brisbane).

Myths persist that US military equipment was buried in underground bunkers when the Americans left Lowood. The truth would appear to be that the USAAF fighter squadrons were at Lowood for only six weeks, from 28 March to 10 May 1942. At that time every nut, bolt, bullet and gun was urgently needed for the war effort in the Pacific so the chance that equipment was buried would appear to be untrue.

RAAF Returns to Lowood

By 10 July 1942 the RAAF's 23 Squadron was at Lowood, having moved there from Amberley. There was no dispersal scheme at this point, and a lack of natural cover nearby (the only timber was near the creek to the north, or on Mount Tarampa to the south of the airfield) meant that Lowood came

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close to being scrapped in favour of Coominya No. 2. Nine camouflaged hideouts for dive bombers were later built near the creek, along with dispersal taxiways.

The RAAF took over Lowood again in September 1942, and by February 1943 Lowood was being developed as an Operational Base (OB), with Coominya No 2 as ancillary landing ground. By 23 May 1943 the MRC was still working on taxiways to the hideouts and by 30 May work had started on a new Wireless Telegraphy (W/T) Transmitting building and a new Operations building. Both of these facilities were of semi-underground reinforced concrete construction, with a curved roof section. The W/T Transmitting building, with a shorter curved roof section than the Operations building, was located about 4km east of the airfield.

The Operations building, sited on the north slope of Mount Tarampa overlooking the airfield was about 35m by 7m and was camouflaged to resemble a farmhouse. The land was acquired around late January 1943, and three masts forming a triangle around the building are indicated on plans from April 1943. The site was about a kilometre drive south of the entrance to the airfield's camp area. There was also an observation post near the summit of Mount Tarampa, reached by a gazetted easement which passed just to the west of the Operations building.

By mid-August 1943 the Operations building was close to the back-filling stage, and by December that year it and the Transmitting building were reported as 95% complete. Other semi-underground RAAF buildings in Queensland included in the report were the Stuart Fighter Sector HQ (extant) and the Zillmere Remote Receiving building (since demolished). However, fitting out of the two semi-underground buildings was still occurring in early 1945. With the threat of Japanese air attack on Lowood fairly remote at this point in the war, there was probably no rush to complete such buildings. On 9 December 1943 a conference at RAAF HQ had in fact decided, regarding the Lowood Operations building, that "owing to the very dispersed location of this building it may be regarded a shadow operations signals building only" (for use only under conditions of enemy attack).

Both the operations building and transmitting building still exist today. A Very High Frequency Direction Finding (VHF/DF) Station, used as a navigational aid, was also installed between the Coominya Connection Road and Pakleppa Lane just to the northwest of the airfield, but this no longer exists.

Work on the airfield also continued. A report in May 1943 noted that although Lowood was originally designed as an EFTS, it was now an OB occupied by the RAAF's 23 and 71 Squadrons. There were about 570 personnel on the base. The land was undulating, and rose towards the south, where the camp was sited on elevated ground. At this time the operations building appears to have been building 9, a classroom near the second Hangar from the east.

There were no permanent bomb stores in May 1943, although some were later built on the west side of Mount Tarampa. The bombing range was located immediately southwest of the airfield, which was still only grassed at this stage, with gravelled dispersal taxiways to the north. In dry

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weather Lowood was suitable for fighters and medium bombers, but it was unusable for up to two weeks after heavy rain.

In order to upgrade the airfield for wet weather use, a perimeter taxiway connecting the ends of the runway to the tarmac area near the hangars was planned and the road would also be deviated around the northwest end of the runway, which would be sealed. The taxiway and road deviation were completed by October 1943, and the 128 degree runway, 6000' by 150' (1.83km by 45.7m), was gravelled and primed by June 1944. Taxiways were listed as gravelled by this stage, and Lowood was classified as an OB for dive bombers.

Sealing of the runway started in late November 1944, and by January 1945 the new surface was proving hard on the tyres of RAAF 32 Squadron's Beauforts. The taxiways are also listed as sealed by early 1945. In February 1945 plans were made to clear the approaches to the runway as crash strip extensions, by about 3700' by 300' (1127m by 91m) at the northwest end, and 2700' (823m) at the southeast end. In June 1945 Lowood was occupied by 18 Beauforts with 32 Squadron, plus 4 Survey Flight aircraft.

The airbase was a vital communications intelligence centre for allied troops in Asia and No. 23 'City of Brisbane' Squadron was the main unit serving there.

The complex comprised 138 individual installations of buildings and bunkers, including an armoury, workshops, photographic unit, post office, living quarters, mess huts, theatre, radar hut and tennis courts. There was accommodation for up to 540 personnel, later increased to about 700.

The main types of duties carried out by the Squadron/Units located at Lowood were shipping convoy duties, anti-submarine patrols and general seaward reconnaissance.

Japanese Submarine Threat

In January 1943, 71 Squadron RAAF (maritime patrol) was formed at Lowood. The squadron's main flying duties were flying anti-submarine and convoy escort patrols. Lowood aircraft encountered Japanese subs.

On 17 March 1943 a No. 71 Squadron aircraft attacked what was believed to be a Japanese submarine. 11 days later the same crew were fired on by another submarine.

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RAAF units which occupied Lowood during the war

RAAF units which occupied Lowood during the war included: No. 12 EFTS (Tiger Moths) January 1942 to April 1942; 23 Squadron (P-39s then Vultee Vengeance) June 1942 to early 1944; 75 Squadron (P-40 Kittyhawks- reforming) July 1942; 71 Squadron (Avro Ansons) late 1942 or early 1943 to December 1943, with A-Flight of the squadron there from May 1942 to June 1944; Survey Flight, March 1943 to January 1946; 21 Squadron (Vultee Vengeance dive bombers) late 1943 to early 1944; 24 Squadron (Vultee Vengeance then B-24 Liberator heavy bombers) circa April 1944 to June 1944; 32 Squadron (Beauforts) May 1944 to November 1945; 14 Operational Base Unit (OBU) November 1942 to February 1947; 47 OBU (in transit) December 1943 to January 1944; 10 Repair and Salvage Unit (RSU), September 1942 to November 1942.

The dates that the Squadron/Units operated at the Lowood are:

RAAF Squadrons and Units

No. 12 Elementary Flying Training School	12.1.42 - 18.4.42
No. 23 Squadron (various aeroplane types)	6.6.42 - 30.4.44
No. 75 Squadron (in transit P-40 Kittyhawk)	3.7.42 - 31.7.42
No. 10 Repair and Salvage Unit (in transit)	1.9.42 - 26.11.42
No. 14 Operational Base Unit	10.11.42 - 17-2-47
No. 71 Squadron (Avro Anson)	10.12.42 - 20.12.43
- A Flight (Detachment)	- 14.5.44
Survey Flight	30.3.43 - 25.1.46
No. 21 Squadron (Vengeance)	30.11.43 - 15.2.44
No. 47 Operational Base Squadron (in transit)	9.12.43 - 16.1.44
No 24 Squadron (detachment)(Vengeance)	15.3.44 - 27.6.44
No. 32 Squadron (Beaufort)	10.5.44 - 20.11.45
No. 3 Aircraft Depot (detachment)	

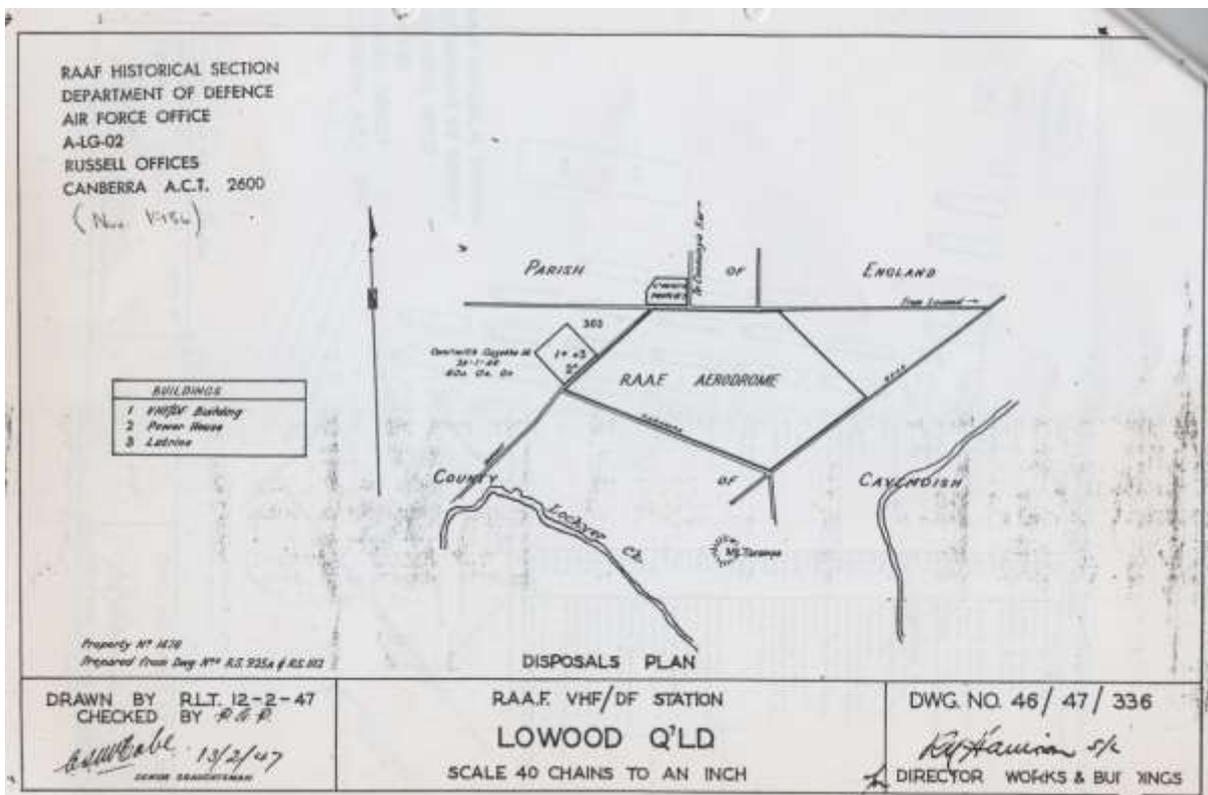
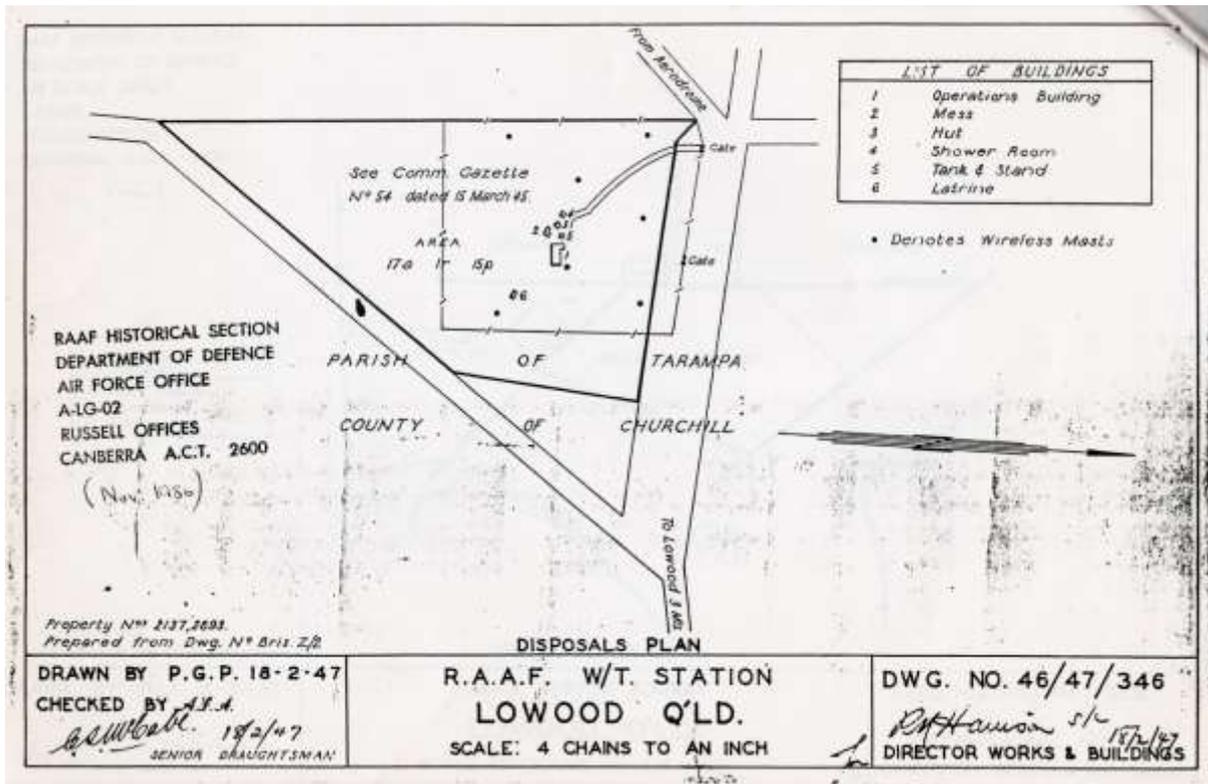
US Army Air Corps Units that operated at Lowood

8th Pursuit Group:

80 th Pursuit Squadron (P39 Aerocobra)	6.5.42 - unknown
603 Ordnance Squadron (Aviation – 1 st Platoon) ²	

² R.K. Piper RAAF Historical Officer – Dept of Defence, Air Force Office, November 1986

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116/6
11/1/42

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS OF WORKS AND REPAIRS
AIR FIELD DATA SHEET

NAME: **WARRAWARRA**
CLASS: **127**
DATE: **11/1/42**

Location: 6 miles west from Lismore. About 24 miles west by road from Ballina.

General Description of Airstrip in Relation to Surrounding Terrain and Features:
All over graded airstrip, in practically level rising towards the south, with very low elevated ground. Surrounding country: agricultural and grazing land, with scattered timber.

Height Above Sea Level: **200 ft.**

General Remarks:
This unimproved airstrip, composed only grass, with grassy patches, south from airstrip. Working range is immediately on N.W. of landing area. Several artificial grass lines, with an open area across airstrip to S.W. of landing area.

Particulars of Runways and Taxiways:

No.	Direction	Length	Width	Surface	Remarks
1	W-E	1000'	150'	Grass	Max length of run on airstrip
2	N-S	2000'	100'	Grass	1.45
3	N-S	4000'	100'	Grass	2.0
4	N-S	4000'	100'	Grass	1.125

Remarks:
No. 1 runway is in sealed condition.

Metological Observations:

Wind-Shift	Wind Dir.	Wind Spd.	Wind Dir.	Wind Spd.
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0

NOTE: Observation taken at 0900 hours only. Probably TRIPLE visibility for runway period, but in winter prevailing wind is from S.W.

Amount of Cloud: Very amount of cloud 40%. Average hours of sunshine per year - 2000 hours. Average number of days on which rain falls per year - 75 days.

Amount of Fog: Considerable amount adjacent to hangars and workshops. Balance of airfield dusty when aircraft taking off.

Altitude: 200' Map D.M. 48

General Remarks:
Access to airfield by recently graded gravel road about 2 miles, bypass about 2 miles from Lismore Railway and township.

Airfield becomes grassy after heavy rain and boggy in lower parts.

Metological Observations:

Wind-Shift	Wind Dir.	Wind Spd.	Wind Dir.	Wind Spd.
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0

NOTE: Observation taken at 0900 hours only. Probably TRIPLE visibility for runway period, but in winter prevailing wind is from S.W.

Amount of Cloud: Very amount of cloud 40%. Average hours of sunshine per year - 2000 hours. Average number of days on which rain falls per year - 75 days.

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Altitude: 200' Map D.M. 48

General Remarks:
Access to airfield by recently graded gravel road about 2 miles, bypass about 2 miles from Lismore Railway and township.

Airfield becomes grassy after heavy rain and boggy in lower parts.

AIRCRAFT ACCOMMODATION

General Accommodation:
4 buildings

Notes:
Nil

STORAGE ACCOMMODATION

Class Building	Description	Area	Remarks
1	Oil store	40/42/21	40/42/21
2	Equipment store	40/42/22	40/42/22
3	Workshop	40/42/23	40/42/23
4	Workshop	40/42/24	40/42/24
5	Workshop	40/42/25	40/42/25
6	Workshop	40/42/26	40/42/26
7	Workshop	40/42/27	40/42/27
8	Workshop	40/42/28	40/42/28
9	Workshop	40/42/29	40/42/29
10	Workshop	40/42/30	40/42/30

Notes stored at present under canvas covered frames and in diluted H.O.P.S.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Remarks: This airfield was originally designed for R.A.F. use and was occupied by R.A.F. 100 Squadron. Station was designed to accommodate about 100 personnel. Present strength - 270. Maximum accommodation available considered to be about 700.

Notes:
40 Fuel 3 - 10,000 gall. O/G tank.
40 Fuel 1 - 10,000 gall. O/G tank with electric heater.

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WATER SUPPLY DATA SHEET

INSTALLATION LOWWOOD (11)

Source of Supply:

(1) Well was dug south of airfield, near Lookout Creek.
(2) Helicopter.

Other Available Sources:

Bore: could be sunk.

Quantity and Quality:

Source	Quality	Quantity	Remarks
Well & Bore	Good	Pumping 1800 galls. per hour does not reduce well.	Well 60' deep with 4" casing bore 20' deep below well. Water is suitable for drinking and irrigation.
Helicopter	Good	10/1000 galls. 4/2000 galls. 2/3000 galls. 2 tanks.	Roof catchment area 10,000 sq. ft.

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Details of Installation:

From well and bore water is pumped through 4" rising main into 2/10,000 galls. tanks on slope of Lookout Terrace. Thence by 4" gravity main (fibreglass pipe) to pump area.

In filtration or chlorination plant.

Make and capacity of pumps: In Well - 2" centrifugal pump driven by 2 1/2 H.P. 1400 R.P.M. ELECTRIC MOTOR.

At Airfield - 4" "Foster's Patent" double action force pump delivering 1000 galls per hour.

MAIN LAYER SYSTEM: 4" main with 2" branches to 11 buildings, latrines, showers, etc.

Building No.	Details	Requirements
01	Officers & Sergeants Mess and Kitchen.	1 1/2" pipe, 1" branches, 10 taps over sinks, lavatories and showers. 2 S.C.'s.
02	Officers' Mess & Latrines	1 1/2" pipe, 6 showers, 10 taps over lavatories, 2 S.C.'s.
03	Sergeants' Mess	1 1/2" pipe, 2 showers.
04	" Ablutions	1 1/2" pipe, 2 showers, 10 taps over lavatories.
05	Sick quarters	1 1/2" pipe, 3 showers, 2 showers, 2 baths, 2 taps over lavatories.
06	Airmen's Latrine	1 1/2" pipe, 12 seats.
07	Airmen's Ablution	" " 12 showers.
08	" "	10 taps over sinks and toilets.
09	Airmen's Latrine	1 1/2" pipe, 12 seats.
10	Airmen's Kitchens	" " 7 1/2" branches, 12 taps over sinks and boilers.
11	Officers & Sergeants' Latrines	1 1/2" 7 showers.
12	Airmen's Latrine	1 1/2" pipe, 6 seats.

NOTE: 1" 2" and 3/4" branches to taps, showers, etc.

Average water consumption per day 10,000 - 40,000 galls.

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MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL SERVICES DATA SHEET

INSTALLATION LOWWOOD (11)

Source of Supply: CITY ELECTRIC LIGHT CO. LTD. DISTANCE

Maximum Capacity of Supply:

(1) Transformer capacity 100 K.V.A.
(2) Transmission Line capacity 100 K.V.A.
(3) Total available capacity unlimited K.V.A.

Details of Supply: 11,000 volt transmission line is up to limit of capacity.

(1) Motor 2 1/2 H.P. 1400 R.P.M.
(2) Generator 80

Estimated Present Maximum Demand: 10 - 15 K.V.A.
Total Existing Load: (approx) 80 K.V.A.
Reserve Capacity: NIL.

MECHANICAL SERVICES

Refrigeration Capacity:

Building No.	Details	Capacity in T.O.N.	Type of Unit
01	Officers & Sergeants' Kitchens	100 G.P.	"Refrigerator" Model H.300 Oregon Fastflow single phase 1/2 H.P. A.C. MOTOR
02	Airmen's Kitchens	100 G.P.	do do
03	Sick quarters	10 G.P.	"Refrigerator" model No. J.C. 23 & Serial No. S.D. 2.5. 250 LBS. Compression & Over-influx 1/2 H.P. A.C. MOTOR
04	Officers' Mess	7 1/2	"Electric Model J.C. 2007 Serial 40-073.
05	Sergeants' Mess	"	do

Not property of R.A.A.F. purchased from Mess Fairs.

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MECHANICAL SERVICES

Refrigeration Capacity:

Building No.	Details	Capacity in T.O.N.	Type of Unit
01, 02, 03	Officers & Sergeants' Kitchens & Ablutions	200	"Britannia" Diesel engine drive burning with 1000 gall. overhead storage tank.
04, 05, 06	Laundry & Airmen's	"	do do
07	Sick quarters	"	do do

Other Information:

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A. F. H. L. WOOD

PROPERTY						A	3
REGISTERED NO.	DATE OF REGISTRATION	DATE OF DISREGISTRATION	FROM	NO.	ADDRESS	PARTICULARS	
5119	9.3.42	9.3.42	Unbranded change	-	Rine	Manufacture, supply delivery overhauled	
K 578	13.3.42	9.3.42	W.A. air den	5504	"	Construct transport & disposal dump for camouflaged	
K 578	13.3.42	18.3.42	W.A. air den	5504	mech	Illustration to Nat. 71, 73 & 74 + building & Ruseau	
K 939	15.4.42	25.3.42	"	1012	"	CONSTRUCT, AIR RAID SHELTERS, TRENCHES & MACHINERY GUN Emplacements	
K 1071	20.5.42	25.5.42	"	1257	"	Construction resources & losses	
5975	11.6.42	25.5.42	OS of work	"	Melbourne	V.A. 875 - alterations addition	
K 1183	23.6.42	25.7.42	W.A. air den	2312	"	Photo proof frames to telephone hooded lens	
K 1252	10.8.42	10.8.42	"	2153	"	Design original, design & manufacture & test	
K 1247	20.8.42	15.9.42	"	2810	"	Lab. Radio 200,000 - camera blinds - 13	
K 1378	19.9.42	5.9.42	"	3141	"	network of cables - furniture	
K 1378	17.9.42	4.9.42	"	3252	"	Experimental treatment of cases burning up over and release	
K 1315	31.10.42	26.9.42	"	2656	"	water supply to Blyth - steel lined house, HQ's office, 1940	
K 1405	11.11.42	2.11.42	"	114	"	Disposal maintenance strip & aircraft, 1940	
K 1405	4.11.42	3.11.42	"	4083	"	Design & assembly building - 1500' built - 1940	
6272	11.12.42	23.10.42	W.A. air den	2085	"	Timing of date - W/T Station	
K 1510	14.12.42	12.12.42	W.A. air den (H. Sew)	2173	"	Buildings & services (providing 24000 lbs of fuel)	
K 1512	15.10.42	7.10.42	N.D.	574	887 Ave	Access Road - Provide for travelling to 1104	
K 1627	19.10.42	10.10.42	W.A. air den (H. Sew)	2224	82d	Extend electricity supply to standard	
K 160	5.3.43	3.3.43	W.A. air den	6115	499 (Australia)	Beacon on Mt. Garrawah etc £300	
K 1690	19.3.43	9.2.43	W.A. air den (H. Sew)	5589	82d	Design of aerodrome etc £1000	
K 1737	5.11.43	23.4.43	"	807	"	Steel safe 71 Squadron (Reserve)	
K 1763	19.11.43	11.4.43	"	6184	"	Constr. of 1st Bldg Bldg W/T Recyde £1750	
						Operational Base - repairs to sandbag traverse around hospital £500	

A. F. H. L. WOOD

PROPERTY						A	4
REGISTERED NO.	DATE OF REGISTRATION	DATE OF DISREGISTRATION	FROM	NO.	ADDRESS	PARTICULARS	
K 1737/1	26.4.43					Electrical	
K 1804	4.5.43	31.7.43	D. W. O.	4414/1	B. Ave	Long low - raised 230 V. 3 phase a.c. £1500	
K 1846	21.5.43		W.D. (Air den)	1775	"	Provide 106 Bomb Shelters etc £330	
K 1773	2.6.43	14.5.43	"	6450	"	17 Buss, type 34 Unit 2 £570	
K 1818	4.6.43	25.5.43	"	6728	"	2 Assoc. cables 5' x 5' type 14 etc	
K 1834	11.6.43	7.6.43	"	6960	"	11 Bldg Radiators with flea adaptor	
K 1851	30.6.43	23.6.43	"	7057	"	Business trainees sleeping bunks Nat 61 87	
71441	1.7.43	27.6.43	D. W. O.		"	Bomb Shelters - string of silo	
71466	6.7.43	2.7.43	D. W. O.		"	Rising to 3000 ft. Refrigerator Unit	
K 1977	9.7.43	30.6.43	W.D. (Air den)	7207	"	2 Fireproof safes 2' x 2' x 2' 3' x 2' x 2' box	
12013	21.7.43	13.7.43	"	2241	"	Sewage & hot water plant efficient & modern large bed	
K 2006	8.8.43	29.7.43	"	2441	"	Cable car room fly trap, compression cables etc	
K 2175	29.9.43	24.9.43	W.D. (Air den)	7613/1	123 1/2	Construction of runway & taxiway £27,500	
8214	10.11.43	8.11.43	W.D. (Air den)	7714	"	New O.B.M. Additions to office building £300	
K 2337	7.12.43	30.11.43	W.D. (Air den)	3909	"	R. L. G. bombing - 1102, 1105	
K 2338	7.12.43	30.11.43	"	3975	"	Funds for minor repairs & water landing area	
K 2341	16.12.43	10.12.43	"	4031	"	Minor repairs & water landing area	
K 2401	4.1.44	31.12.43	"	4306	"	1 safe 2' x 30' x 24' x 24' each	
K 2452	24.1.44		"	4302	"	Bldg. section - 50' x 2' C. gas run down	
K 2569	8.3.44	7.7.43	"	7273/1	"	No 10 check group - Purchase of timber	
K 2603	13.3.44	7.3.44	D. W. O.	774	"	Re-siting of elect. overhead lines	
K 2603/1	21.3.44		D. W. O.	771	"	Addl. W.L.A. 4. Accidents 1000 x 2	
K 2677	14.4.44	6.4.44	W.D. (Air den)	5234	"	Hot water devices	
						Aero - Provide for priming with fuel the "b" Areas	

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PROPERTY						K.A.A.F. Lowood		Substition	Card No.
Registered No.	Date of Registration	Date of Commencement	From	No.	Address	Particulars			
K 2948	20.7.44	24.7.44	Dept. Air	2080		W.A.A.F. 8th Auto 75-76		A	5
K 2175/1	8.9.44					64 Blinds			
K 2175/2	8.9.44					Re-routing of overhead elect mains			
						Boundary of sewerage pumping stn.			
						stalling tank & rising main			
K 2119	14.9.44	2.9.44	Bin Abk. Bldg	2844		3100' lengths of zinc sheet complete with			
						couplings			
K 3159	27.9.44	7.10.44	"	3265		Wires 26' area of flight strip near runway			
K	29.9.44	22.9.44	"	3265		"			
K 3176	4.10.44	2.10.44	805' met	177		Painting of runway			£7900
8700/87	4.10.44	2.10.44	D. W.O. Air Sqn	177		Proposed Laemas extension			
K 2481	4.10.44	20.9.44				Auto - Sealing of runway 100' Perimeter Sealing			
K 2244	27.10.44	22.10.44	Bin Abk. Bldg	3202		1014 - Open Mesh Rail - 400 only two gallon			
						S.A. Extinguishers			
8701/112	20.11.44	26.11.44	R.T. mms	177/112		Restore natural surface hardstanding			
K 3272	7.11.44	31.10.44	Bin Abk. Bldg	3277		1014 - Open Mesh Rail - 2' 100' length 2 1/2"			
						canvas fire hose			
K 3271	7.11.44	30.10.44	Bin Abk. Bldg	3201		1014 - Open Mesh Rail - 2' 100' carbon-take-also			
						fire extinguishers etc			
K 3180/87	10.11.44	11.11.44	D. W.O. Air Sqn	22		Shelter for P.S.V. Beacon control by Mr. Kemp			
8700/140	10.11.44	11.11.44	D. W.O. Air Sqn	22		14000 - 10' high light outside hangar 25 - replace 12			
K 3287	13.11.44	6.11.44	Bin Abk. Bldg	3287		14000 - 10' high light outside hangar 25 - replace 12			
						14000 - 2' 100' high light outside hangar 25 - replace 12			
K 2308	20.11.44	11.11.44	"	3252		14000 - 2' 100' high light outside hangar 25 - replace 12			
K 3247a	1.12.44		"	139		14000 - 2' 100' high light outside hangar 25 - replace 12			
K 3396	21.12.44	15.12.44	Bin Abk. Bldg	3396		14000 - 2' 100' high light outside hangar 25 - replace 12			
K 3475	23.1.45	18.1.45	"	4227		14000 - 2' 100' high light outside hangar 25 - replace 12			

PROPERTY						LOWOOD		Substition	Card No.
Registered No.	Date of Registration	Date of Commencement	From	No.	Address	Particulars			
K 9664	23.1.45		Miles Mgr	72		area of land off stn. 1000'			
K 1737/4	26.1.45		72 50			1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
						1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
9690	2.2.45	2.45	D. W.O. Air Sqn	2045		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
8700/196	19.2.45	10.2.45	D. W.O. Air Sqn	70		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3500	24.2.45	20.2.45	Bin Abk. Bldg	3501		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3500	5.3.45	3.45	"	600		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3581	5.3.45	3.45	"	601		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3417	6.3.45	9.3.45	"			1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3502/10	22.3.45	20.2.45	D. W.O. Air Sqn	766		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3687	16.4.45	11.4.45	Bin Abk. Bldg	3188		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3755	14.5.45	10.5.45	"	3184		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
8700/282	16.5.45	5.45	D. W.O. Air Sqn	740		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3804	4.6.45	10.5.45	D. W.O. Air Sqn	745		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
						1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3924	31.7.45	28.7.45	C.L. 22809	292		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
8700/389	2.8.45	7.8.45	D. W.O. Air Sqn	7523		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3851/19	9.8.45	26.7.45	"	24		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3957	11.8.45	8.8.45	Bin Abk. Bldg	3957		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
8700/40	21.8.45	18.8.45	D. W.O. Air Sqn	7524		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			
K 3997	26.9.45	12.9.45	"	27		1000' - Minor repairs Mils			

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Photo above: Lowood originally was an all over airfield for use by Tiger Moths utilizing the area bounded by the perimeter road. With the decision to make it a major base a runway was constructed and the all over airfield lost. The cost of the runway was 83,153 pounds. The runway was 6000 feet in length and 150 foot wide.

The following photos are of aeroplanes that operated were operating from RAAF Lowood. I have tried to show photos from each type of aeroplane that operated from the airfield. Most were involved in anti-submarine patrols. There was well-placed concern about submarine attacks on costal shipping.

On 14th May 1943 the Australian hospital ship AHS Centaur was torpedoed and sunk 24 nautical miles north-east of point lookout on North Stradbroke Island with the loss of 268 lives.

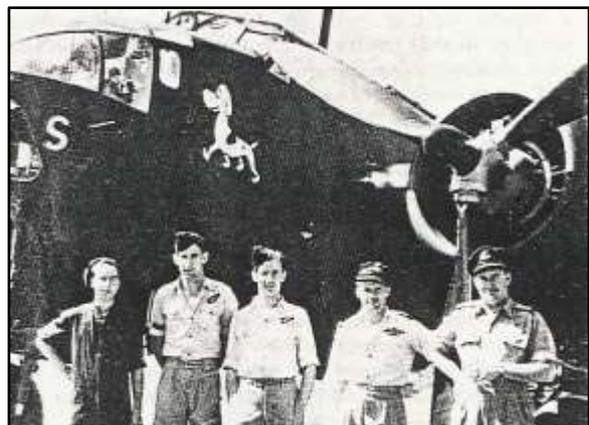
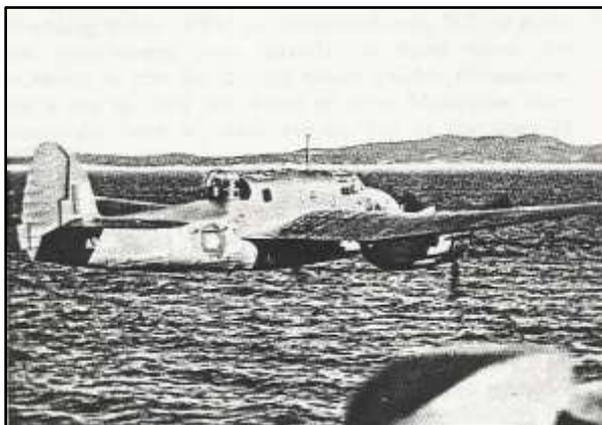


Photo Above and right: Beaufort JM-S A9-609 "Sniffer" of No. 32 SQN

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Photo above: Six anti-submarine Wirraways of No. 23 SQN



Photo above: Avro Anson of No 71 SQN

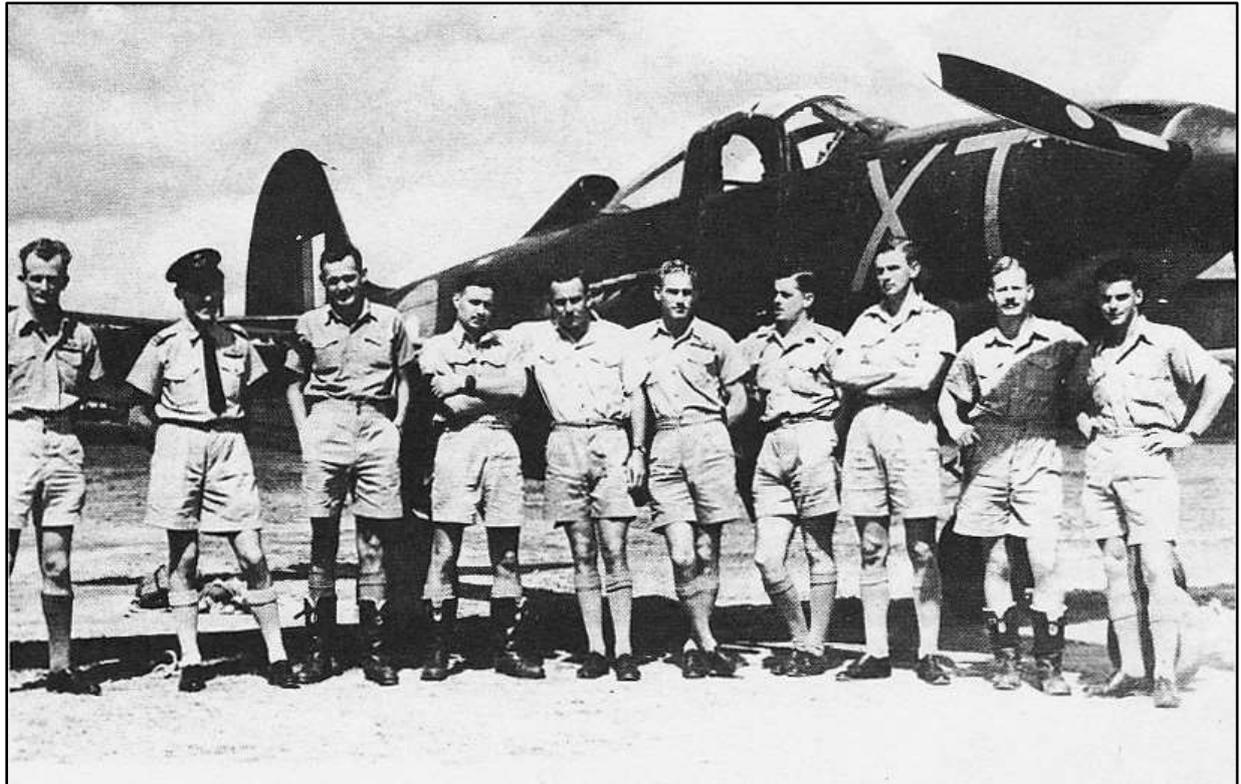


Photo above: 23 SQN personnel in front P39D Airacobra A53-12



Image above: Tiger Moth of No. 12 EFTS



Image Above: 71 SQN Avro Anson on Sea Patrol³



Image above: Ambulance at Lowood

³ <http://www.news-mail.com.au/news/bundy-crew-saves-survivors/2643774/>

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Image Above: Moth Minor A21-7 at RAAF Lowood with a Wirraway in the background



Image Above: P39 Airacobra of 23 SQN at Lowood

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Post WW2 History

In 1947 the base closed with the airfield held on an "Obtained but not Maintained" basis. Following representations with the Queensland Motor Sporting Club, the runway and taxiways were made available as a motor racing circuit and several meetings were held.

In 1957 the Government finally decided to dispose of the airfield and it was purchased by the Queensland Racing Drivers Club which set about developing it into a first class motor racing circuit. This bought the 16 year ownership of the airfield to a close.

For several years it had the reputation of being one of the safest circuits in Australia. Lowood hosted many high profile events in its time including, rounds of the Australian Drivers Championship in every year from 1957 to 1962.

Twice the Australian Tourist Trophy in 1959 and 1963, The Australian Grand Prix in 1960, Lowood created its own four hour race for production sedans in 1964, 1965 and 1966; along with this the track hosted the second Australian Touring Car Championship in 1961 and also the Australian Formula 2 Championship in June of 1964.

However the construction of Lakeside circuit north of Brisbane with its greatly improved spectator facilities in 1961 meant that Mt Tarampa (as the former airfield had been renamed) was soon superseded.

The race track was closed and the land sold and it was not long before all traces of the former aerodrome and racetrack had all but disappeared.⁵

Finally.....

I would like to thank member Roger Marks for the help he gave me in putting together this article and for putting together his book "WW2 airfields in Queensland" and various other publications that preserve the WW2 aviation history in Australia. Go to <http://www.qaww2.com/> to see what publications Roger has for sale.

⁵ Gatton Star 28 August 1991

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Disclaimer: All views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the author, the editor or the Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group Australian Flying Museum Inc. They are simply opinions and are not necessarily fact.