

1942.

NEW ZEALAND.

AIR DEPARTMENT

(REPORT ON THE) FOR THE YEAR 1941-42.

Presented in pursuance of Section 7 of the Air Department Act, 1937.

REPORT BY THE HONOURABLE F. JONES, MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE AIR DEPARTMENT, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1942.

MR. SPEAKER,—

I have the honour to present to Parliament the report of the Air Department for the year ended the 31st March, 1942.

Because it is impracticable to publish detailed information of defence programmes during wartime and on account of the very serious shortage of paper-supplies, it has been decided to reduce drastically the scope of the Department's report.

I desire to express to all concerned my appreciation of the efficient and energetic manner in which they have met the many problems and difficulties of this period.

REPORT BY THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1942.

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on the Royal New Zealand Air Force for the year ended 31st March, 1942.

Personnel.—The enlistment of personnel for the Royal New Zealand Air Force has proceeded satisfactorily, although there has been some difficulty in maintaining adequate reserves of certain classes of volunteers for technical trades.

Awards. A total of 107 awards to New Zealand air personnel was made during the year, bringing the figure since the outbreak of war to 188.

Casualties.—(a) Overseas: Since the outbreak of war the following casualties to New Zealand air personnel have been officially reported: The comparative figures as at 31st March, 1941, are shown in parentheses. Killed, 529 (156); missing, believed killed, 51 (20); missing, 135 (59); prisoners of war or interned, 132 (50); missing, believed prisoners of war, 6 (nil): total, 853 (285).

(b) In New Zealand: During the year there were thirty fatal flying accidents, involving the loss of fifty-four lives. Two lives were lost in falls from aircraft, four deaths were recorded in non-Service accidents, and two deaths were due to natural causes.

Training Organization. (a) Flying Training: The flying training organization necessary to meet commitments under the Empire Air Training Scheme was completed in May, 1941. Since that date all commitments have been met. Good reports have been received from other Empire countries in regard to the general standard and efficiency of New Zealand trainees, and reports on the actual training of New-Zealanders in Canada have indicated that they are generally above average in the final placings. Service Flying Training Schools have been reequipped with the most modern type aircraft for the training of pupils.

(b) Technical Training: There has been continued expansion in technical training, and a high standard has been maintained.

Educational Services.—During the year the educational services have been maintained and extended to include provision for radio mechanics, wireless operators, and the Air Training Corps.

Air Training Corps.—The organizing of the Air Training Corps proceeded during the year, and the success of this scheme should assist materially in maintaining the subsequent strength of the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

Women's Auxiliary Air Force.—Members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force have been serving on Air Force stations since April, 1941, and have rendered excellent service. In addition to their employment as clerks, shorthand-typists, and in the officers' and airmen's messes, they are now employed as wireless operators, instrument-repairers, Link Trainer instructors, telephone operators, and equipment assistants.

Medical Branch.—The year has been one of increased work for this Branch, but the health of air personnel in New Zealand has been maintained at a high level.

Dental Services.—A large increase in the volume of work undertaken by the dental services has been carried out with efficiency.

Operations.—Reconnaissance squadrons of the Royal New Zealand Air Force have played an important part in the defence of New Zealand, by protecting shipping in the approaches to the main ports and focal areas, by providing escorts for important shipping and convoys, and by carrying out patrols and searches to seawards from the New Zealand coasts.

Works and Buildings.—There has been considerable expansion in the works programme during the year, and the fullest co-operation has again been given by the Public Works Department.

Aircraft and Equipment.—(a) *Equipment:* With the entry of Japan into the war, the formation of additional operational units called for large quantities of equipment. Air Ministry has responded most effectively and prompt deliveries have been arranged.

(b) *Unit Changes:* There have been many changes during the year, but these have been made without loss of efficiency during the change-over periods.

(c) *General Supply Position:* Difficulties have, of course, been met from time to time, but, on the whole, supplies have reached this country with great regularity.

Maintenance.—In common with the increased range of operations, the Maintenance Branch has experienced a great increase in work, but, due to the efficiency and keenness of the personnel, it is possible to report that all major problems have been met.

Aeronautical Production.—The co-operation and efficiency of local manufacturers have assisted to overcome many difficulties and have been a feature of the year's work.

Meteorological Office.—There has been a great increase in the quantity and scope of the forecasting required for the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

R.N.Z.A.F. Band.—The Band of the Royal New Zealand Air Force has continued to render good service and has travelled extensively throughout New Zealand on recruiting campaigns. It has also assisted in raising money for the Patriotic Funds and for War Loan appeals.

Conclusion.—The year has been one of exceptional expansion, particularly in the development of additional operational units within the Dominion. I desire particularly to pay a tribute to the work of my predecessor, Air Commodore (now Air Vice-Marshal) H. W. L. Saunders. His untiring efforts to develop the Royal New Zealand Air Force have provided an excellent foundation upon which to build, and the task of meeting expansion requirements and of preparing New Zealand more adequately to defend herself in the face of the present trend of the war has been consequently facilitated.

I have, &c.,

R. V. GODDARD, Air Commodore.

Chief of the Air Staff.

REPORT OF THE ACTING CONTROLLER OF CIVIL AVIATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1942.

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

THE staff of the Civil Aviation Branch has been much reduced since the outbreak of war, though the normal functions have had to be continued, and in some respects, mainly as the result of the services operated by Tasman Empire Airways, Ltd., and Pan-American Airways, Ltd., the importance of the work has increased.

Commercial Aircraft Services.—Six internal scheduled aircraft services remain in operation, with a total route mileage of 1,273 miles. For the year the following statistics are available (figures for preceding year in parentheses):—

Passengers	..	..	..	..	..	39,058 (37,023).
Mail	..	..	..	..	..	165,670 lb. (130,806 lb.).
Freight	..	..	..	..	..	194,858 lb. (206,936 lb.).
Miles flown	..	..	..	..	..	688,723 (645,702).

International Services.—International services were operated during the year by Tasman Empire Airways, Ltd. (Auckland–Sydney), and by Pan-American Airways, Ltd. (San Francisco–Auckland). This latter ceased operations early in December, 1941, when Japan entered the war. Traffic on these two services for the year is indicated in the following table:—

Company.				Passengers.	Freight.	Mail.
					lb.	lb.
Pan-American Airways, Ltd.	..	..	..	638	18,940	29,266
Tasman Empire Airways, Ltd.	1,959	32,230	167,275

I have, &c.,

J. M. BUCKERIDGE,

Acting Controller of Civil Aviation.

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