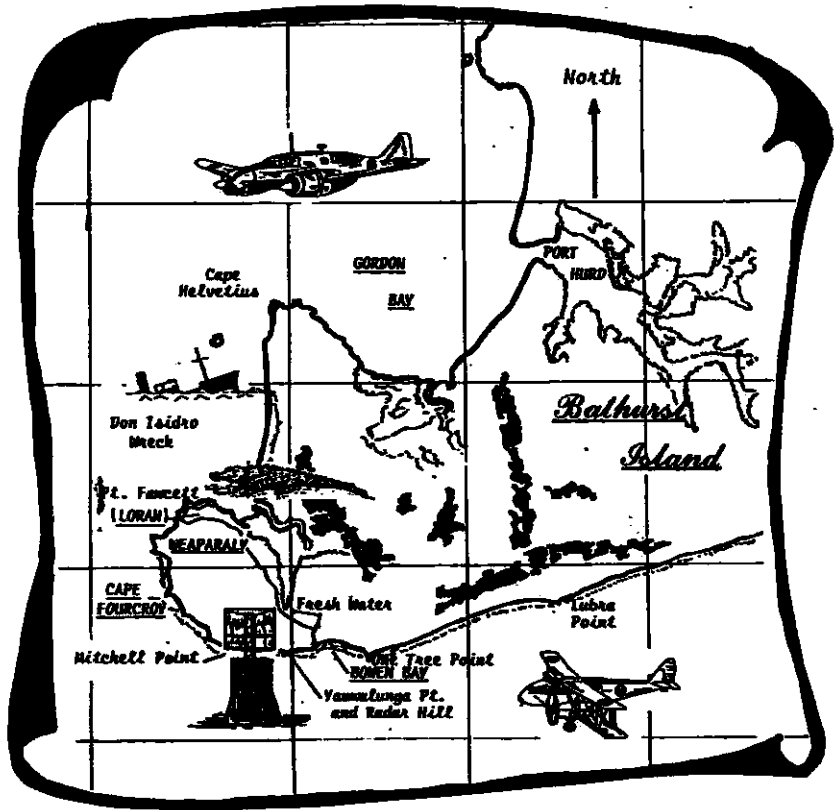


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38 RADAR BATHURST ISLAND.



Edited by

**MORRIE FENTON
MAX [BILL] COUNSELL**

The History and Stories
of
38 RADAR
BATHURST ISLAND.

A RAAF RADAR STATION
ON BATHURST ISLAND.

*38 Radar filled a key
defence and offensive
role in the story of
wartime Darwin.*

Printed in 1995,
'Australia Remembers'
Year.

Edited by

MORRIE FENTON
MAX [BILL] COUNSELL

38 RADAR
BATHURST ISLAND.

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Morrie Fenton
and
Max Counsell

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(M.E.Fenton,)
27 Lasscock Ave.,
LOCKLEYS.5032.

S.AUST.

Max Counsell was posted to 38 RS in 1943 as a Radar Operator, and his knowledge and experience assisted greatly in assessing the material offered.

Morrie Fenton has had considerable experience in producing and publishing small radar histories, particularly of N.W.A. stations, and is also custodian of a large collection of radar photos.



FOREWORD

Bathurst Island was a pleasant place in 1944-5 when I was there. It still is. The climate is delightful and the fishing superb. The descendants of the Aborigines who helped us then remain the same friendly and proud people we used to know. I was very honoured this year when I was presented with the Tiwi flag - most impressive and colourful. I have already flown it from Government House Darwin when some of the Tiwis visited me recently.

One of the great events of the Territory year is the Grand Final of the Tiwi Football League. The air is thick with planes as "big mobs" of Darwinites fly over to watch the fantastic skills of a football-mad community.

I suppose I am the last of 38RS still to visit the island regularly. But I would be delighted to re-introduce it to any ex-RAAF member who was there before. It will certainly enhance your enjoyment of this entertaining book compiled by Morrie Fenton and Bill Counsell. We must all be thankful to them for collecting these reminiscences and presenting us with a pleasant nostalgia in our (approaching) old age and before we depart into the Dreamtime.

Radar stations had a special camaraderie. Thirty or so young Australians - mechs, ops, guards, cooks, general hands, auto mechanics - gathered together in remote parts of the continent. There they found tolerance, humour and goodwill. Lasting friendships were formed, and I suppose the great lesson learned was that Australians have the gift of mateship. I doubt if we would have philosophised in this way at the time, but we absorbed these things every day and I am sure it helped us in our later life. There is a little bit of 38RS in us all and that is why we welcome this book and express our gratitude to Morrie and Bill.

The Honourable Austin Asche AC QC
The Administrator of the Northern Territory
26 September 1995

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

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Ed. Simmonds.	Henry Milvain. (C.O. Dec. '44.)
Hal Porter. (C.O. Sept. '42.)	Ron Sawade.
Tiwi Land Council.	Dean Dadds.
Max Counsell.	Ron Pearce. (Tech. Officer.)
Laurie Leckie.	Morrie Fenton.
Theo. Harvey.	Jack Hunt.
Max Baker.	Errol Suttor.
Russell Bushby.	Max Sutherland.
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Austin Asche.	Jim McClelland.
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"Adventures in Radar." (Hal Porter.)	Defence Department: RAAF Historical.
"A Saga of Achievement." (E.R.Hall.)	RAAF Discharged Personnel.
"Stirring the Possum." (Jim McClelland.)	"Echoes over the Pacific." (Ed. Simmonds and Norm Smith.)

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The story and legend of the Tiwi Islands has been printed with the permission and assistance of the Tiwi Land Council.

The photographs used have been lent or given by:

Theo. Harvey, Laurie Leckie, Max Sutherland and Alex Culvenor.

Special Thanks to our Editor-in-Chief, Ed. Simmonds for his advice, help and encouragement at all times.

Also Special Thanks to Wing Commander Pete. Smith, Commanding Officer of 3 CRU, Williamtown, whose practical assistance, encouragement and enthusiasm has been very much appreciated.

Because of W/Cdr. Smith's interest, a Radar Archives and Research Facility has now been established at Williamtown.

Morrie Fenton.
Max Counsell.

#####

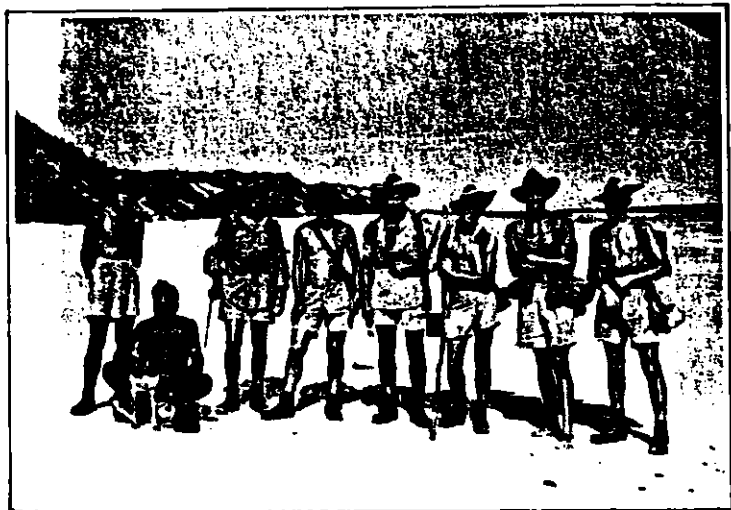
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38 RADAR, BATHURST ISLAND.



Two groups of men down on the landing beach, below the camp. These are the only group photos of 38 RS.

THE LEGEND OF THE TIWI ISLANDS.

".....and then Mudangkala, the old blind woman, arose from the ground carrying three babies in her arms. As she crawled in darkness across the featureless landscape, seawater followed and filled the imprints made by her body. Eventually the pools became one and formed a channel. The old woman continued her journey overland and once again the moulded earth filled with the flow of water.

Before she left, Mudangkala covered the islands she had created with plants and filled the land and sea with living creatures. Finally the land was prepared for her children and for the generation of TIWI who followed."



THE STORY OF THE ISLANDS.

Morrie Fenton.

Who can even imagine when the dreamtime stories and legends of the TIWI people first began...15000 - 20000 years ago or more - long before the end of the last ice age when the rising seas severed the islands from the mainland, to become 'the world' and they became 'the people.' The Dutch explorers and adventurers of the 17th. and 18th. centuries have left their record of the first European contact with the TIWI people - from the 1630's to the early 1700's when the island warriors defended their world and their homes - and the Dutch were content to make an orderly withdrawal and sail away.

Over more recent years, the Macassans, Chinese, Portuguese, the English and the French have all made some contact with the islanders - the English even established a small outpost for a few years at Fort Dundas near where Garden Point is now located on Apsley Strait - but the TIWI people of Bathurst and Melville have been able to maintain their independent island life, almost untouched by others until well into this century.

In 1911, Father Gsell began the church mission work on Bathurst - its influence has gradually increased with the passing years - and in the 1920's the islanders worked at various Darwin defence establishments, so beginning a closer contact with the outside world - but the outbreak of war in the Pacific brought about the biggest impact on TIWI island life when the men were sought to assist on marine craft, and to work at defence posts. Bathurst Island was the first Australian soil attacked on February 19th., 1942 - and the first two warnings of the coming air attack on Darwin came from Melville and Bathurst Islands. The war eventually ended with the islanders held in high esteem for their contribution to the defence of Darwin and its surrounding areas.

At 3B Radar, at the western end of Bathurst, the TIWI people earned a high reputation as good workers and a proud and reliable people - and in turn the Radar men were careful to respect their families, and to respect their way of life away from the Air Force camp.

EARLY WARNING FROM CAPE FOURCROY.

Ed Simmonds.

The need for adequate early warning of any air raid being mounted against Darwin was apparent from the day of the first attack when the ten defending American P40's were not alerted until the raid had actually commenced. It was obvious even then that the heavy American fighters needed every possible advantage - time - height - up sun - positioning - in order to meet the Japanese escorting fighters on anything like equal terms.

The American 49th. Pursuit Group, under the command of Lt. Col. Paul B. Wurtsmith, arrived in Darwin about three weeks after the first raid, and a de-briefing session was then held after each raid. These were attended by his Squadron and Flight Commanders, the Senior Fighter Controller, and the Group Signals Officer, (F/O L.Northey) The obvious observation was made - all incoming tracks were close to the S.W. tip of Bathurst Island, Cape Fourcroy, and it seemed that the Japanese used it as a navigation and formation point for their fighters and bombers before setting course to attack Darwin. So the decision was made to place a man with a radio as a coast watcher close by.

LAC Bill Woodnutt, a W/T Operator, became the I/C of the coast watch station at Weaparaly* (the place of the big sand dune) - which was just north of Cape Fourcroy at a place where an emergency air strip had been cleared, possibly when Qantas first commenced an air service to Singapore. Two other airmen, ACI's McCoy and McKenzie, both clerks, accompanied him, also two TIWI Aborigines from the Bathurst Island Mission, Louie and David.

Their first report of a 50+ attack force proved the value of the idea, as the warning time for the P40's was extended by twenty minutes, giving the defending fighters time to achieve height and position to meet the enemy.

From its inception until it closed late in 1942 when 38 Radio** Station came on air close by, the Weaparaly coast watch station was very efficient, earning a commendation from Lt. Col. Wurtsmith to AOC NWA which included the following....."Information furnished....of great value to the Controller. This station has definitely proven its value, and Acting Corporal Woodnutt and his crew are to be commended."

Bill Woodnutt served two spells at Weaparaly - and during the second he rescued the navigator of a Beaufighter that had crashed into the sea near Cape Helvetius, for which action he received the BEM. More of this can be read in the Diary history notes.

By November 1942, 38 RS had been set up a few miles S.E. of Cape Fourcroy, close to Mitchell Point. Soon after the station came on air, the coastwatch crew ended their duties. The strategic importance of the Fourcroy location was so apparent that one Radar operator afterwards observed it was difficult to understand why the station was not attacked - it must have been obvious to the enemy that an observation post, or radar station, would have been located there.

* Weaparaly. Bill Woodnutt spelt this phonetically.. 'Quiparellie.' This may have been because of his mother's French background. The station Diary also recorded the name as Quiparellie, Queparelly, and Weeparellie.

**Early Radar stations were known as Radio stations. See footnote below the section, 'Early Darwin Radar.'

EARLY DARWIN RADAR.

Morrie Fenton.

No Radar station was on watch when Darwin was first attacked from the air on February 19th., 1942, although 31 Radio* station (as Radar was then described,) was being constructed at Dripstone Caves, north of the town. 188 Japanese planes - bombers, fighters and dive bombers - attacked Darwin on that fateful day, killing more than 200 people, and the enemy naval strike force was able to approach its target almost undetected. 58 land-based bombers launched a second raid on the town the same day.

Two 'visual' warnings were transmitted from the Tiwi islands - Melville and Bathurst - but both were disregarded, and no action was taken until the planes were actually over Darwin and preparing to attack the town, its installations, its harbour and shipping. To counter the attacking force were 10 American P40's, and it was only by co-incidence that they were then at Darwin. Their defensive tactics were desperate in the extreme as those that became airborne acted almost independently, chasing any target that came within their sights; those not airborne were destroyed while still on the ground.

Bathurst Island itself was attacked as the enemy force flew over the island. A Catalina flying boat was destroyed to the north, and the Mission station was attacked, while a C53 aircraft on the Mission strip also was destroyed. North-west of Bathurst, two ships were bombed. The FLORENCE D was sunk, and the DON ISIDRO drifted ashore north of Fourcroy where she burnt. From the Mission radio hut, Father McGrath sent his warning message to Darwin at 9.35 a.m., which was 20 minutes after a warning from the northern tip of Melville had been sent off by coastwatcher John Gribble. Darwin was attacked at 9.58 a.m., so both warnings, if heeded, would have given adequate warning.

31 Radio station at Dripstone came on air on 22nd. March when it immediately gave Darwin warning of yet another impending air attack. Fortunately Australia's Radar programme was already gaining a little momentum, for two more stations were operating near Darwin within a few months - stations 105 and 109. In June 1942, 38 Radar and 39 Radar formed up at Darwin with Australian AW gear, 38 Radar then moving to Bathurst Island to set up camp, and 39 Radar to Port Keats. For some 4 months, 38 Radar struggled to become operational, delayed by shortages and non-delivery of stores, lack of equipment and parts, little building equipment and almost no food supplies, other than bully beef, for there seemed to be tons of that, and precious little other food besides. The sole generating unit on which operations first depended was a well worn 1926 engine - but at last on November 6th., the station came 'on air.'

38 Radar remained operational until September 1945, earning a distinguished reputation for its effective cover to Darwin, meanwhile changing to even more effective COL Mk.V equipment in September '44. The station appeared to be consistently under the inward path of enemy aircraft, while 39 Radar at Port Keats seemed close to their usual outward course, so that these two 'pioneer' stations were able to plot many of the raiding planes as they approached and left the Darwin area. For that reason, their reliable operation was of prime concern - 38 Radar particularly so as its advanced position to the north of Darwin, added to its normal range, gave extremely early warning of approaching enemy raids.

**Radar was first described as Radio Location or Radio Direction Finding (RDF). Until February 1943 the units were called Radio Stations - then RDF Stations. The term 'Radar' was adopted in September 1943, and Radar is often used in this story in a general sense being the generally recognized term today.*

FIXING THE STATION SITE AFTER FIFTY YEARS.

Morrie Fenton.

It's certainly been a tough job....but we're pretty close I'm sure!

Fixing the exact location of a radar station invites a small avalanche of varying opinions, all with convincing arguments of course. Postal addresses, general areas, prominent landmarks, site co-ordinates can all be quoted when seeking a station location - anything other than the precise spot. So too with 38 RS Bathurst, often generally described as 'Cape Fourcroy,' which back in 1942 was the principal landmark close to the station, with Point Fawcett and Mitchell Point the other coastal features of lesser import.

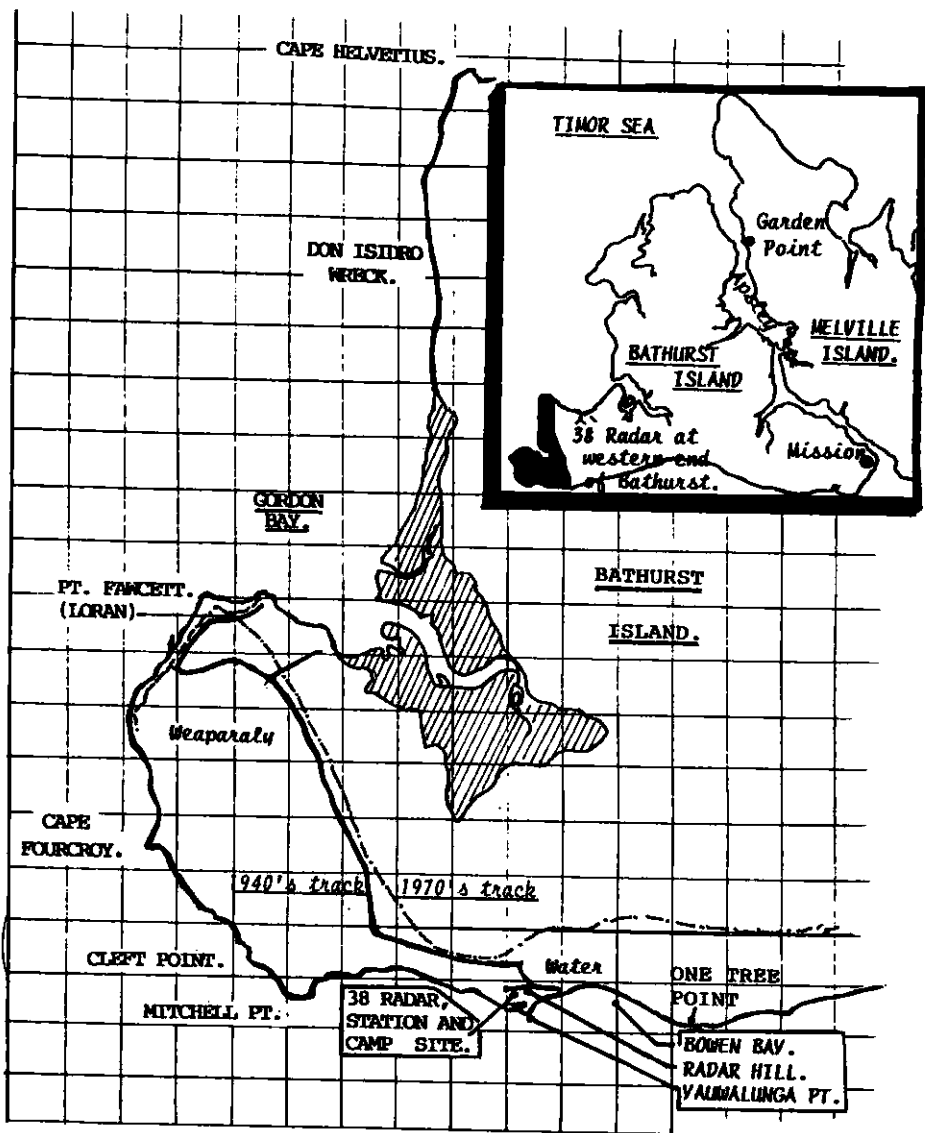
Several good indicators, mainly estimates of distance, are recorded in the station Diary which has to be accepted as the 'Station Gospel.' The Diary clearly indicates that the camp was fairly close to and within walking distance of the landing beach which indisputably was the bay ending at the easterly One Tree Point. From the beach, the Diary quotes 8 miles to Weaparaly (Ouparellie) and Point Fawcett - about 5 miles to Cape Fourcroy, and about a mile to the camp. Other relevant entries state the distance to the water supply - about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the camp and up behind the beach; and that there were no tracks at the western end of Bathurst in 1942.

In his autobiography, Dr. Clyde Fenton describes his epic flight to China in his Tiger Moth in 1936...and in Chapter 17 states that he first landed at Cape Fourcroy to top up his tanks from an emergency fuel dump established there by Shell in an underground tank. This must have been at the emergency strip referred to in the 38 RS Diary as 'Weaparaly,' (Ouparellie) where the American LORAN station was later set up in 1944, and which was some 8 miles by track from the RAAF camp. This Weaparaly area was between Cape Fourcroy and Point Fawcett, and was the same area where Corporal Woodnutt and his crew first operated as coastwatchers. 'Doc' Fenton apparently called there while they were still on duty, which indicates that their camp was fairly close to the Weaparaly strip.

Six or seven Bathurst veterans have confidently named the Mitchell Point area as the 'Doover site.' All seem to agree on the distance of $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the water supply which for a long time was well known to all as the daily chore for a bucket brigade... and all agreed the water site was behind the landing beach. And the Diary records that when the water source flooded, it flowed towards the beach cutting the road from the camp. All of these points seem to localise the camp and Doover area fairly well indeed.

At some time in the fifty years since 38 RS days, three more landmarks have been named and now appear on the maps of the place. The 'landing beach' has become 'Bowen Bay,' and the easterly part of the Mitchell Point area is now Yauwalunga Point. All the clues indicate that this was the general site of the camp and the Doover hill, with the water source $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away and behind the beach. On recent maps, 'Radar Hill' has also appeared, leading up to Yauwalunga Point. This seems to be a remarkably good clue, and it would be good to confirm that the name is 'wartime historical.'

Two Bathurst veterans have forwarded longitude and latitude co-ordinates which fall neatly on Mitchell Point, but these would be for the three beacons set up there as an aid to aircraft navigation particularly. But of all the indicators, perhaps the most conclusive would be the tracks marked on two survey maps of the area, and these details are shown together on the map on the following page.....



A survey map was first produced in 1944 when the LORAN camp was being set up. This composite map shows the track of 1944 (in heavy black line) from the landing beach westward a short distance to the camp area - also the track to Weaparaly. The short track would have then ended at the camp site at the foot of the Radar Hill.

The track indicated by the 'dot-dash' line is from a 1970's map, which also features the three 'new' names grouped together. Distances can be calculated from the squares, each representing 1000 m x 1000m. Note that no track approached Cape Fourcroy or Mitchell Point.

A TRIBUTE TO THE TIWI PEOPLE.

Hal Porter.

Radar airwarning based on the south western tip of Bathurst Island offered Darwin defence a major advantage. It provided an extra 70 miles flying time for aircraft approaching from the Timor area, the main source of enemy raiders. Thus, North Western Headquarters' order to 38 Radar to give 'absolute priority to getting on air' was very sound. Unfortunately, the support needed for the task was sadly lacking.

A very small group of mainly inexperienced but willing men was dumped on Bathurst in virgin bush with poor food supplies and very little of the equipment required for construction. The AW Transportable Radar was made up of a number of heavy structural steel elements, and other unwieldy parts, which all had to be manhandled from the supply ships to the beach and then to the top of a very large and steep sand hill. And the pieces did not go together like the proverbial Meccano set. Furthermore, living conditions had to remain extremely primitive as we worked from dawn to dark to become operational, and camp supplies eventually caught up.

Enter the Tiwi people. We found we had a relatively large support group willing and able to help in many ways, allowing the technical men to concentrate more on their specialities.

For weeks the Tiwi people toiled up and down the sand hill in merciless heat carrying or dragging heavy burdens. They assisted loading the truck and with the erection task itself. They experienced the same frustrations with inadequate tools as we did and we soon learnt that swearing in the Tiwi language expressed the same frustrations as in our own. When we eventually switched on power and the aerial started turning majestically, their satisfaction matched our own, albeit a little more awed.

We enjoyed similar support in building the giant staircase up the sand hill to give easier access to operations, and in developing much more reasonable living conditions in our camp.

As well as providing valuable manpower, the Tiwis did much to relieve the natural tensions of the primitive conditions and isolated vulnerability - they were masters of their environment. They were a happy friendly group who loved chatting, singing and dancing, and especially gambling, which was fascinating as each new acquisition - tobacco, a toilet item and so on - circulated amongst them, but few of us could follow their system. And we were able to swap food - mud crabs for bully beef - a wonderful exchange.

Importantly the Tiwis also added to our security, providing many watchful eyes and acute hearing, as they quietly moved through the bush. The women-folk, very shy and retiring, supplemented the observations of the men.

Our Tiwi workers ranged in age from relatively old men to young boys. Their bronzed skins glistening with sweat, tireless legs and ready grins, were very welcome sights in those hard early days.

On at least two occasions Tiwis brought in to the Mission, on the eastern side of the island, downed Japanese aircrew. Louis, who became our Head Man, captured one group. On hearing of the intruders he approached Father McGrath for a loan of the one and only .303 rifle. The good Father agreed but pointed out that there was only one cartridge. Louis responded "Oright Father me line 'em up!"

He brought in a most subdued Japanese crew who had been carefully led through the bush away from water for several days. Louis satisfied his own needs at night.

It was "Line-em-up" Louis from then on!

Whilst it was not a case of Tiwis to the rescue, they made a major contribution to shortening the construction phase of 38 Radar, reducing the effects of isolation, and adding security. The important role they played reflects very well on their Mission training and especially on themselves.

After some fifty years, we remember with affection and respect their contribution to the successful operations of 38 Radar, from 1942 to 1945.

There was Louis (Head Boy), Bartholomew, Basil, Benjamin, Captain, Coffeepot, Diamond, Fidelis, Flowerpot, Ginger, Isador, Jacob, Jimmy, Jo-Jo, Lopez, Packsaddle, Placid, Tipperary, Umbrella, Valentine, and others whose names, regretfully, are lost in the mists of time.

F.H.Porter,
(Station Commanding Officer during the installation and first
operating phase.)



A group of Tiwi islanders playing their version of poker. The rules were clearly understandable to themselves, but incomprehensible to outsiders.

38 RADAR.....A SUMMARY OF THE STATION STORY. Morrie Fenton.

38 Radar, Bathurst Island, began to form up at the height of the Darwin crisis - mid 1942 - and other than the well known 31 RS at Dripstone, could claim to be Australia's best known station, and its most strategic.

The station was set up under the most difficult of conditions, lacking equipment, tools, decent rations - and making do with a few tents in the bush, no fresh fruit or food, no mail and some make-shift equipment, not to mention the doubtful honour of being just a few men on the most northerly Australian outpost, and badly lacking in any defensive training. And at first the only direct communication with Darwin was by the occasional small ship.

The unit was virtually left to fend for itself on the island, with its AW radar gear, one old and temperamental generator motor, a marquee and tents and some W/T gear, and was expected to get 'on air,' - which it did, after four months. The only 'positives' in getting the job done was the friendly help and knowledge of the Tiwi people who were living at the western end of Bathurst Island - and afterwards, the direct help of the newly formed 6 Communications Flight with F/Lt Clyde Fenton in charge.

Slowly - and gradually - conditions improved, and the station came on air on November 6th., 1942. First came the more essential camp buildings - the kitchen - the Mess - the latrines. Gradually the huts and buildings increased or were improved. Steps were cut and placed up the notorious Doover hill - DH Dragon planes from Darwin began to land on the beach - but always the men were conscious of defence and security with camouflage covering everything. There were detachments of guards - total blackout - even tracks on the beach were carefully covered or concealed as enemy planes seemed always to assemble and form up directly over the western end of the island, and there was the constant possibility of being seen and attacked.

38 RS played a key role in reporting approaching raids because of its advanced location, but as Australia and her Allies gained air superiority in the area, the air raids lessened, to die away completely in 1944. A giant air offensive then began from Australian bases - and all radar stations in NWA took on a watchdog role, tracking the Allied planes out and back to Darwin. The everyday work and life of 38 Radar changed as the station assumed a more static role in the oversight of Darwin air traffic.

Firstly, new, heavy equipment arrived - the long range English COL Mk.V, complete with Lister diesels. And during the long months while this was being installed, the camp itself was being improved as much as possible with better buildings and facilities - and better food. The new gear finally came on air in September 1944, after some seven months.

And now there was more company on the island. There were Americans at a LORAN station, and scientists from CSIR. There was time for more relaxation, fishing, social evenings, sports competitions and picture shows. Suddenly in August 1945 the war was over. From Air Defence Headquarters came orders to pack and prepare to move back to Darwin. The gear was packed - the tower dismantled. Some of 38's men moved to take over the LORAN station when the Americans moved out. Others were posted south on to other stations.

So 38 Radar, Bathurst, ended its long and outstanding watch over Darwin.



THE DOOVER HILL. The formidable hill of reddish sand on which 38 Radar Doover was built retained its reputation as a severe physical test until the end of operations when the last of the gear came down. The first Doover was built in 1942 with the help of 'All Hands to the Task' - radar men and Tiwi families ran a shuttle service to the top, while the heaviest of the steel stuff was dragged up using the truck to hoist it via block and tackle. All this was done under the cover of heavy camouflage, with not even a footstep exposed to the skies where the enemy planes turned to set course for Darwin. A series of steps were cut and set in position. Treads were fixed and access from the camp was then safer if not easier - one still had to feel for the steps by night when not even a torch was allowed.

38 Radar, Bathurst Island.

The names of Personnel who were the first to be posted to Bathurst have been taken from a photocopy of 38 Radar Station Personnel Occurrence Report, 1/42 issued after the formation of the unit in June 1942.

Mathieson. C.J. Blumenthal. C. (temporary attach.)

Porter. F.H.

Testaz.	J.	Cook.	Davy.	S.J.	Tr. R/Op.
Pearce.	A.W.	Guard.	McNab.	H.	"
Robinson.	C.F.	"	Sturmey.	S.G.	"
Werrett.	B.T.	"	Green.	B.F.	"
Williams.	C.W.	"	Bleazard.	W.J.	"
Wilkins.	A.R.	"	Suttor.	E.F.T.	Radio Mech.
King.	W.S.	"	Goodenough.	R.	Fitter DMT.
Myers.	C.H.	Teleph. Op.	Richardson.	A.W.	Mess Stew.
Baylis.	S.C.	W/T Op.	House.	A.G.	Radio Mech.
Player.	M.J.	Clerk Gen.			
Peel.	T.G.	Radio Mech.			*****
King.	B.	"			
Pride.	H.R.	W'less Mech.			It is pertinent to note that
Waddington.	J.	W/T Op.			in this first 'posting' of
Bean.	H.A.	Fitter 2E.			men, there were two NCO's -
Clinton.	G.H.	Messman.			a Corporal Cook and a Corporal
Roberts.	A.J.	Nurs. Ord.			Fitter DMT.
Rolland.	H.J.	Messman.			
Downie.	W.A.F.	Cook.			
Malein.	G.E.	Teleph. Op.			
Dowell.	R.S.	Clerk Stores.			

The Commanding Officers of 38 Radar Station appear to have been:-

P/O C.J.Mathieson.	June 1942	F/O J.Jordan. (Act)	Mar 1944
P/O F.H.Porter.	Sept.1942	F/Lt C.R.Meckelburg.	Mar 1944
P/O J. Jordan.	Jan. 1943	F/O J.H.Reen.	Sep 1944
F/Lt C.H.Lucas.	June 1943	F/O H.H.Milvain.	Dec 1944
F/O J.F.Briar.	Jul. 1943	F/O L.B.Lyons.	Mar 1945
F/O N.G.Nilsen.	Aug. 1943		

Other Commissioned Officers who were stationed at 38 RS were:-

P/O R.Ryan.I/C of Advance party.	F/O J.F Briar.	Tech.
P/O H.W.O'Brien. Admin.	P/O R.Pearce.	Tech.

Whilst the list of Commanding Officers appears complete from the station Diary, the list of other officers may be incomplete.

38 RADAR, BATHURST.

This list of Personnel has been compiled mainly from 'names remembered,' by contributors, from the station Diary, letters, personal diaries and similar sources. It is most definitely an incomplete record, but is presented in all good faith as 'the best to date.'

Sgt.	Sands.		LAC	Myers.	
Sgt.	Cassidy.			Peel.	
Sgt.	Chatwin.		LAC	Bayliss.	
Sgt.	Waite.	H.	LAC	Bear.	
Sgt.	Jonkergnow.	R.		Stebbins.	W.
Sgt.	Wingfield.	R.	LAC	Furnell.	
Sgt.	Camilleri.		AC1	Waddington.	
Sgt.	Kennedy.		AC1	Robinson.	
Sgt.	Dugan.			Taylor.	B.
				Leckie.	L.
				Burton.	
LAC	Byrne.	L.H.		Bishop.	J.
LAC	Bethune.	A.		Chivers.	J.
AC1	Eaton.	A.G.		Hession.	R.
Cpl.	Hockham.			Waite.	H.
	McK. Smith.	H.V.		Baker.	M.
Cpl.	Jones.	J.		Ulyett.	J.
	Mansfield.	J.		Dadds.	D.
	Connelly.	K.		Stanley.	F.
LAC	Harvey.	T.		Whitlock.	J.
	Leith.	I.		Little.	J.
	Long.	K.		Clarke.	G.
LAC	Counsell.	W.M.		Johnson.	F.
	Sutherland.	M.		Veel.	J.
	Watt.	T.		Reynolds.	F.
	Culvenor.	A.		Hewlett.	N.
	Hunt.	E.J.		Davis.	B.
	Sawade.	R.		Howell.	J.
	Walsh.	J.		Schnookal.	L.
	Bentley.	K.			
	Ellis.	E.	LAC	Eastburn.	
	Bushby.	R.	LAC	Dobbin.	
	Scott.	J.	LAC	Jones.	
	McKinnon.		LAC	Irving.	
	Asche.	A.	LAC	Magor.	
	Nottle.	A.G.	LAC	Richardson.	
	Newbold.	P.	LAC	Mills.	
	McClelland.	J.			
LAC	Feldmann.	R.			

The 'station' names adopted by the Tiwi islanders who at some time worked around the camp are listed below. These island men were very much woven into the RAAF station life.

Packsaddle.	Captain.	Lopez.	Flowerpot.	Jimmy.
Coffeepot.	Valentine.	Diamond.	Jacob.	Placid.
Isador.	Bartholomew.	Jo-Jo.	Tipperary.	Ginger.
Fidelis.	Louis.	Benjamin.	Basil.	Umbrella.
Wilfred.	Alias.	David.	Tommy.	Victor.

THE DIARY HISTORY OF 38 RADAR, BATHURST ISLAND. Morrie Fenton.

When seeking out and compiling a station history, it is a great bonus to receive the story of an incident, well described with the names, circumstances and a conclusion, all in perhaps a few hundred words.

By way of contrast, in the Station Diary, the same incident might merit one line - brief and factual. But nevertheless, the Diary does cover the whole life of the station, and most of its incidents, from the first month to the last.

Perhaps then, the Diary history is more of a precis of station life.

1942.

July 1st. "Commencing early this month, the formation of (38 RS) commenced under P/O C.J.Mathieson. Personnel arrived, and a base dump of stores and equipment was made at 31 Radio Station." (Dripstone)

The first Diary entry gives little indication of the worries and indecisions, the shortages and non arrivals of supplies and equipment encountered by the three young officers responsible for the station in the first weeks of its existence. On August 14th., an advance party of 14 men, under the command of P/O R.Ryan arrived at the western end of Bathurst Island on H.M.A.S TERKA. Little equipment arrived with them however, and the party had little idea of its objectives, or what was expected of it. Consequently, very little was achieved. Meanwhile, P/O Cec Blumenthal continued to gather supplies and equipment for the station at Dripstone, acting as a 'supernumerary officer for 38 RS.

The Commanding Officer, P/O Mathieson arrived at Bathurst on 24th. August with some equipment and the unit motor transport, travelling from Darwin on the YAMPI LASS. The move had been poorly organised and collapsed under the strain, again with little or no work achieved. Disputes arose over the siting of the tower, and there was great concern concerning the possibility of enemy commando raids. During all this time, the vulnerable and valuable radar equipment was left on the beach where it had been landed, quickly deteriorating and rusting.

F/Lt. Hannam, the Area Radio Officer from NWA H/Q visited the station on the 28th. August, and the Commanding Officer was afterwards replaced by P/O F.H.Porter, who arrived on September 1st. on the MOLANDA to take over command. First the site for the radar tower was decided on, then the camp site was chosen, and setting up the station then began. The men had been camped in sand dunes a couple of miles from the Doover site:- they now moved to the new camp location near the foot of the ridge on which the Doover was to be erected. This site also provided very good camouflage cover in among trees.

The tower steel work was now taken in hand at the top of the 200 foot slope. Lt. Wells of the Navy assisted the C.O. in superintending the work, and the steel frames and equipment were hauled through the sand to the top of the slope, using block and tackle with the station lorry doing the heavy work of pulling on the hoisting rope. In all this preparatory hard work, the Tiwi Aborigines were of great assistance; but the work was made doubly difficult because of the necessity to keep everything hidden beneath camouflage screening, artificial trees and bushes.

The Principal Medical Officer from NWA H/Q visited the struggling new unit on the 20th. September, and was so horrified at the living conditions that a very scathing report was submitted after his return to Darwin, but no

noticeable improvement in supplies or conditions resulted from his visit. Towards the end of the month - and as no further supplies or equipment had arrived, work on the camp and the technical gear slowly came to a stop, and nothing more could be completed until a boat arrived with more material. During October, Sgt. Sands and Sgt. Cassidy arrived, the first two capable and reliable NCO's able to assist the C.O. in supervising work around the camp and with the station administration work; then on the 23rd. October, a shipload of equipment arrived which included much of the material and stores necessary to bring the station to the operational 'on air' stage, and so the work started again.

Wing Commander Pither, the Director of Radio Services, accompanied by the NWA Area Radio Officer, paid a flying visit on the 27th., and this inspection resulted in a later conference to ensure that in future no officer and station be just 'dumped' and left to work out their own problems, solutions and salvation. 38 RS had indeed been a case in point with the C.O. held solely responsible to get the station on air, despite lacking stores, parts, equipment and basic supplies. But now with all necessary materials on hand, progress was quickly achieved on building a Mess hut, kitchen, latrines, stores hut and even a camp oven. The men's tents were improved, paths were defined and the administration work was brought up to date as far as possible, though this very much depended still on the occasional arrival and despatch of mail by boat.

At the end of October, 41 men were on strength, plus a detachment of guards. November. At last, despite the shortages, frustrations, delays and accusations, 38 RS came on air on November 6th., and a 24 hour watch was established. And as the operators began to improve their skills and become accustomed to the AW gear, so the performance of the station improved, and a very commendable range of 145 miles on a friendly aircraft was obtained. On the 22nd. of the month, the first hostile plots were logged when Japanese aircraft were tracked at ranges of 90 to 120 miles. Two of these enemy planes were destroyed - Spitfires were now defending Darwin - and the operators enjoyed the unique experience of plotting an enemy aircraft as it was shot down, the echo dying off the screen, while at the same time a guard on duty reported that he saw the plane descend in a ball of fire. Unfortunately, at the end of the month, a power transformer burnt out, putting the station out of action. The shortage of replacement parts was so great a problem that the station was not operating again for 13 days.

December. 38 RS came back on air when the transformer arrived by 'special' ship...on December 11th.,..... meanwhile the men strung trip wires with rattle tins attached around the Doover site, and two gun positions were selected where Vickers machine guns could be set up to cover the approach from the beach.

Several test flights were arranged during the month to try out the capabilities of the set, and the performance of the gear was considered to be quite satisfactory.

On Christmas Eve, the station paper - 'The TROPIC STAR' - made its first appearance - and for their Christmas dinner, the men enjoyed a meal of fish and oysters, quite a relief from the usual diet of bully beef. A camp concert was held in the evening - and so ended the first Christmas Day celebrations at 38 RS Bathurst. Normal duties were resumed for the remaining days of the month, with work continuing on the Mechanics' hut and the W/T hut, both of which, once again, had to be left unfinished because of lack of materials.

On December 29th., two Tiwi women reported that a twin engine aircraft

had crashed near Cape Helvetius. Sgt. Sands and four airmen set off to the rescue crossing Alligator Creek in a badly leaking dinghy. One airman was found near the wreck of the DON ISIDRO - the other, the navigator of the Beaufighter, was being carried out to sea by the current. He was rescued by Corporal Bill Woodnutt, the coastwatcher stationed at Weaparaly; and Sgt. Sands was able to report back to the station that both airmen were safe in bed at the coastwatchers' camp.

Corporal A.E. (Bill) Woodnutt was awarded the BEM for rescuing the navigator of the Beaufighter. He set off with a small rubber dinghy, and the whole rescue took more than an hour and a half in shark and crocodile infested waters.

In Bill's own words...."The ocean swim was not too bad, though I feared the huge sharks which I had often seen cruising these waters. Crossing the rather wide estuary that lay between my camp and the beach on which the pilot, 'Tiny' Wilkins, had landed was a different matter. This teemed with crocodiles, which I had observed many times sunning themselves on sandbanks and beaches. I wasn't frightened - I was bloody terrified. To this day I suffer from sharkophobia and crocodilophobia."
The citation said that the BEM was awarded for courage and endurance displayed in rescuing a comrade from the sea on 29/12/42 while with SFS at Darwin.

This month, 44 RDF Wing was established at Coomalie Creek - a move that proved of great benefit to the early stations, for the new RDF Headquarters was able to attend to the requests, the shortages, the personnel, and the welfare of the outlying units in much better fashion than NWA H/Q.

1943.

January 1943 proved a busy month for the new station, with 'settling down' the order of the day. A tractor and a water tender arrived by the PATRICIA CAM which sailed afterwards taking thirty men of a survey team which had been on Bathurst. This exodus certainly relieved pressure on the resources of the station and its limited accommodation. On the 6th. of the month, the 1926 Auburn generator motor - the station's sole source of power - failed for 3 hours, giving a hint of bigger troubles to be expected. The coastwatcher station at Weaparaly closed down also, and their air observers' duties were also taken on by the men of the station. A party of men, under the command of Sgt. Dudgeon, set off to inspect the wreck of the Beaufighter aircraft, north of the station; and considerable trouble was experienced when the station attempted to operate on low power, for the surging of the engine with its voltage variation burnt out resistors, condensers and relays. A Tiger Moth aircraft - probably the first to land at the station - arrived with an engineer officer to ascertain the reason for the Beaufighter crash, but little could be ascertained although the site of the crash was known. [6 Communications Flight was set up in December 1942, so possibly the Tiger Moth was one of the unit's early aircraft.] On the more positive side, the PATRICIA CAM arrived on the 13th. with a new Ford V8 generating unit, and work started immediately on installing and setting up the new engine and generator. The second edition of The TROPIC STAR appeared on the 16th., and during the next day the new engine was started for the first time. Its performance was good, and the station came back on air, despite some bad problems with the aerial turning gear. P/O Jordan, soon to be Commanding Officer, and P/O Porter combined their resources and energies to expel a few snakes of various descriptions and sizes which had taken up residence in the Dover and its surrounds, this

exercise proving just as exciting as the small raids attempted by the enemy on Darwin. Another sports carnival and concert were arranged to make a break from the daily routine duties - and the TROPIC STAR made its third appearance - all good morale boosters for the men. The technical breakdowns experienced during the month could all be attributed to the 1926 Auburn motor with its uncertain performance, but with the arrival of the new generating unit, and the promise of more spares and new parts, a more reliable performance was anticipated.

February.

P/O J. Jordan took over command of 38 RS on the 1st. of the month, his immediate problem being the report of a mine washed up on the southern beach about 20 miles from the station. And a new idea was to instal the motor horn from the unit transport in the camp area as an air raid alarm, and further precautions were taken by blacking out the mechanics' workshop. On the 6th., a DH 84 Dragon landed on the beach with several visiting officers from RDF Wing - this was probably the first of the Fenton's Flying Freighters to land near the station - and a signal was received requesting that attention be given to assessing the condition of the runway at Weaparyaly, but an inspection of the old emergency strip showed it was not usable during the wet season.

The visit of the C.O. and Adjutant, and the Messing Officer from Wing resulted in a promise of some attention to badly needed supplies for the station, and three days later F/Lt Fenton returned with some of the promised stores - hopefully an indication that more attention would in future be given to supplying the needs of all isolated stations.

By the 15th., food rations on hand were short again, consisting mainly of bully beef, but with no flour, sugar or tea. And also the W/T set was out of commission. The next crisis was the rear tyres on the tender which blew out, so threatening the supply of water for the camp, as the tender was the only water transport.

Fresh rations arrived on the 20th., on TOLGA - meanwhile the men were working on seating for the Mess, installing electric lighting in the tents via a master switch, and attending to the 'jobs to be done' around the camp. Other ideas introduced this month were euchre and housie-housie nights which marked the commencement of a regular programme of entertainment evenings. And a well camouflaged garden was started by an airman experienced in the art of agriculture - the unit cook was known to be anxiously waiting for the promised harvest of beet, lettuce, tomatoes etc. to transform the appeal of the monotonous meals.

Several shortages and non-arrival of spare parts had again become a giant problem - a makeshift rope fan-belt had to be used on the Ford engine for six weeks - and Wing was advised that the operating staff would be encouraged if the station was informed of the outcome of the reports sent in. Amazingly, the only news the station seemed to receive was via the BBC broadcasts from London.

By the end of the month, weapon pits had been carefully sited and prepared around the camp, and each man knew his post in the event of air or ground attack, for the personnel were very conscious of the station's advanced and vulnerable position as the most northerly Australian outpost. Enemy activity had been quiet this month, but nevertheless, plots on enemy and unidentified aircraft were passed to F/S on at least ten occasions.

March commenced with yet another problem added to the sad and sorry saga of 38 RS - the problem of the unit's water supply. The retaining bank, or wall at the billabong, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south-east of the camp was broken,

and before it could be repaired, a great amount of water was lost. And for the first day since the station had become operative, no aircraft plots-friendly or hostile - were passed to Fighter Control. In contrast on the very next day, 126 plots were passed in just 2½ hours on unidentified aircraft.

Another report on a stranded mine was received, this time east of Cape Helvetius - also with the ceaseless heavy rain came yet another problem, for the billabong water supply was again threatened; and now the ever-present shortages also included the supply of sandbags on hand, so oil drums were placed in position and then filled with sand and soil to reduce the pressure on the retaining wall - but the water broke through on the 12th., damaging the road to the beach and releasing about half of the water held.

P/O H.W.O'Brien arrived on the 19th to take over Administration Duties - then on the 23rd. came the Big Day when the AOC NWA, Air Commodore Bladin visited the unit accompanied by F/Lt. Fenton; and after a very thorough inspection of the camp facilities and the station working conditions, a parade was held when the AOC expressed his satisfaction with the unit and its personnel.

For the greater part of the month, the gear had operated on medium power, and was 'off air' for about twelve hours. Fortunately, air activity had been quiet except for raids on March 14th. and 15th. when a range of 93 miles had been recorded.

When weather conditions improved, the tents and buildings were repainted, and the camouflage repaired and attended to. Two lots of comfort parcels had been received, which pleased the men; and regular euchre tournaments were now being held.

April commenced with a visit from HMAS SOUTHERN CROSS, en route to investigate the mines washed ashore on the island. This welcome visit was followed by two DH Dragon aircraft with mail, meat and new radio gear - these air mail deliveries were now becoming more regular.

The construction of the new beach road was completed, and then HMAS AMBOYNE arrived with a detachment of 22 guards - also delivering food stores and supplies. The ship then proceeded with 16 of the unit personnel to attend to salvage work on the wreck of the DON ISIDRO.

On the 12th. of the month, a serious breakdown occurred in the oscillator unit, and as repairs could not be effected out on the island, the two officers left by DH to have the unit repaired at 44 RDF Wing - a lengthy job taking 8 days in all. Meanwhile, back at Fourcroy, concern was felt when white Verrey lights were seen 2 miles east of the camp. As a precaution, extra guards were detailed for duty.

With the repaired oscillator unit back at the station and installed, 38 RS was again operational on the 20th., and a visiting camouflage officer checked the camp surrounds, and also made a preliminary inspection of a possible new camp site.

On the night of Good Friday, 23rd. April, the unit's first church service was conducted in the Men's Mess by the Commanding Officer, assisted by P/O O'Brien.

6 aircraft had landed on the beach during the month, and RDF Wing was advised that the Auburn motor had to be replaced soon, for voltage variation of up to 50 volts had been logged. Enemy activity in April was negligible.

Early in May, Aboriginal 'spotters' at Weaparaly sighted a submarine out from Cape Fourcroy and immediately reported to the station - and F/Lt Wadley, the C.O. of 44 RDF Wing, arrived to inspect the unit and the camp, also the

proposed new camp site.

F/O O'Brien, the Administration Officer, left the camp on the 7th. as he had been posted away, and again, all the tents were re-camouflaged to suit the changing season and conditions at the end of the Wet Season.

On the 16th. May, the two supply craft from Darwin, TOLGA and TERKA, brought fuel and other heavy supplies - even two refrigerators - a sure indication that conditions at the isolated island radar camp were improving - then came more enforced idleness up at the Doover while the gear was tuned and checked, and the station was off air for 9 hours.

Concern was again felt when a green flare was sighted about 4 miles from the camp - and again when a light was seen off the cape - and advice was received from Fighter Sector that an aircraft was missing. A party set off from the camp to search the area, but nothing was seen.

During this month, the equipment was off air for 3 periods totalling some 24 hours - the condition of the old Auburn motor caused big voltage surges which in turn caused breakdowns in circuits and equipment. But one very big improvement this month had been the installation of the two badly needed refrigerators, and the Mess had been extended by some 5 feet giving more room and far more comfort.

During May, 9 aircraft had landed on the beach, bringing mail and urgently needed supplies. The principal enemy activity occurred on the 2nd., when a large force attacked Darwin. The station had been able to track the aircraft throughout the raid, first picking them up at 101 miles. Several Spitfires were lost when their fuel had run out.

June. The old Auburn motor finally expired completely, suffering from the terminal illness of a cracked piston and the consequent damage. The station now relied on the one Ford V8 motor, and went on air for restricted hours while waiting for the long needed replacement Ford. This arrived on the 4th., on the SOUTHERN CROSS, and was brought ashore through heavy seas. All went well, though, and the new motor was ready for use by the 14th., when continuous watch was again resumed. Few expressions of sorrow were heard when the old Auburn was back-loaded on the TOLGA on the 19th., the same craft bringing some 20 tons of rations.

On the 20th., Aborigines reported that an aircraft had crashed some 25 miles from the station. The C.O., with three airmen and two islanders, set off by tractor to find the crashed aircraft, but because of the rough terrain, they experienced great trouble in making progress. When eventually they reached the site, they were unable to reach the wreck because of the tide.

Meanwhile, as a bit of relaxation, the men arranged a day's fishing at Weaparaly, a great fishing place; and a swimming parade was also arranged, but then came another report from spotters that a second aircraft was seen to crash and burn about 15 miles N.E. of the camp. A signal from 44 RDF Wing requested a search be made for the crashed aircraft. The only discovery was a rubber dinghy drifting about 4 miles off the coast, and Wing was advised.

Meanwhile, F/Lt Lucas took over as C.O. on the 23rd. June, and F/O J.F. Briar arrived to assume duties as RDF Officer on the 29th. when F/O Jordan departed.

4 enemy raids were plotted during the month, the best range being 114 miles, and 5 aircraft landed on the beach with personnel and supplies. There were now 32 men on the unit, plus a security guard unit of 21 men.

July. Since the station had first been established, the water supply had continued to be a difficult and time consuming task, involving a bucket and tank brigade. Water was lifted by bucket into a tank on the unit truck, brought $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the camp, then hand pumped into a raised tank. At long last, a survey and assessment was made to lay a pipeline from the billabong to the camp tank - a total distance of 2200 feet, and involving a lift of 90 feet.

Meanwhile, no trace of the crashed aircraft had been found, but three tanks were recovered, British and Japanese, indicating the site of the crash had been localised.

On July 5th., the construction of a new stores hut was commenced, probably as the outcome of a Court of Enquiry into Deteriorated Rations recovered from the old unit store. On the day following, a C.O.'s Parade was held, followed by a camp inspection - a rare occasion indeed on radar stations. Some further camp improvements were begun, involving the laying of an improved drainage system from the kitchen, and a Dutch oven was constructed. Of more relevance and importance, mumps was reported near the camp - a 10 year old Tiwi boy - and the Tiwi Aboriginal camp three miles away was declared out of bounds to all personnel.

Corrugated iron was again on the shortage list, and work on two new buildings, the store and the Officers' Mess, came to the usual standstill with only their framework completed.

Some danger came about because of a bushfire, only 1 mile from the station fuel dump, and over a period of days a party remained in attendance to watch and hopefully extinguish it. The fire flared up on two occasions, necessitating additional effort which was all the more difficult as no spray pumps or firebeaters had yet arrived. Suddenly, these were delivered, and were put to effective use.

On 21st. July, one of the Ford engines became unserviceable because of contact breaker points. Replacement parts arrived by plane the next day, but unfortunately the distributor shaft was bent and with only one engine working, the station closed down at 2200 hours for the next few days until the replacement parts arrived. And on 24th., F/O J.F. Briar took command of the station.

On the 29th. of July, the billabong again broke through the retaining bank, and temporary repairs were carried out using sandbags. And the technical breakdown of the 27th., causing the station to close down, extended into a major fault-finding problem, and it was 9 days before operations commenced again.

Enemy aircraft were tracked on 4 occasions in July, the best range being 108 miles, and 11 aircraft landed on the beach, bringing personnel, supplies and replacement parts.

August began with the station still off air, but repairs to the billabong retaining wall were also a concern - some seven tons of sand were used to reinforce the sandbag repairs of some days before. The stores hut next received attention with the fixing of shelves and strengthening of the floor in the hope of excluding marauding rats, but as no concrete could be laid until a supply of cement arrived, little success was expected. The ablution area was improved and new incinerators were built, and the station again became operative on the 5th. of the month.

More bushfires were reported, and at one stage these came within 200 yards of the camp, and 30 men fought to control it. The next day saw yet another minor emergency when a 5 second earth tremor caused the collapse of the sandbag walling around the Dover; and as the Mess was undergoing a rebuilding job at the time with electric lighting and the laying of a concrete

floor, the men rostered for duties around the camp had a busy and lively time.

Work began immediately on renewing the protective blast walls around the Doover - fuel drums were used this time - and towards the end of August the new stores hut was enlarged and camouflaged.

Up to the present, the aircraft supplying the station had landed on the beach at low tide, but on the last day of the month the Weapary strip was again inspected for possible use in the future.

9 supply aircraft had landed this month, and although there was considerable air activity in and out of Darwin, no enemy raids were recorded. This indicates that not all incidents were entered in the station Diary, for a private Diary recorded several enemy plots, and Darwin was bombed three times.

The first task in September was to transfer and check all stores into the new and larger store shed, then the old store was converted into a garage and toolshed, large enough to house the tender and tractor.

On the 3rd. September, the first Sunday of the month, and in accord with a request from the King that a National Day of Prayer and Dedication be observed, the Commanding Officer conducted a special church service.

On the 6th. of September, a submarine was sighted heading towards Darwin on a S.E. course, and calibration flights to check the performance of the equipment were commenced. At one stage, the Anson aircraft involved was reported to have landed on the beach, but this was not so. The beach was visible from the Doover site on top of the sand ridge, S.E. of Mitchell Point.

Alterations and additions to the kitchen were now attempted, but again these were restricted by the small quantity of building material on hand. So the improvements were halted for the time, and work commenced instead on a soakage pit for the showers run-off, followed by the construction of a raft, to be used when unloading supply craft, as well as a convenient platform when swimming.

By the 16th. September, the protecting blast wall around the Operations site was completed, and with the arrival of more building material, the store shed was finally completed.

11 aircraft had landed on the beach during the month, and enemy aircraft were plotted on 4 occasions, but no ranges were recorded.

October. The very busy programme of station improvements continued on into October, the first on the list being the completion of a new bread oven to improve the locally made product. And the W/T hut and gear received attention - first the aeriels, then the hut was rewired and its blast walls renewed. Next the alternator neutrals were solidly earthed, and a new beacon began operating.

Among the several camp improvements, the Officers' Mess was finally completed, and the framework for the Mens' Mess was erected, also a start was made on the showers and laundry area - but without doubt, the most important work was the installation of a pump and engine at the billabong, also the setting up of water storage tanks and extra piping to suit the new system. So at long last, after some fifteen months, the heavy task of bucketing the water up into the tender, then pumping it into an overhead tank finally ended.

And so the works improvement programme continued for the month, during which 11 aircraft had landed on the beach with supplies and personnel -

and enemy planes were tracked on one occasion only.

November proved a quiet month. An inspection was made of the proposed new camp site for the American LORAN station by two visiting RAAF officers, and another slight earth tremor was felt, but no damage was caused to the station or the equipment.

On the 14th., the Tiwi islanders held a corroboree with some of the camp Aboriginal workers taking part. A B24 Liberator bomber caused an alert to be sounded (probably no IFF) and a general meeting was called to elect a Welfare Committee, a sure sign that all was now well under control with the men looking for organised activities. The principal incident of any note occurred on the 24th., when a Japanese lifejacket was found on the beach. Gas lectures, defence and evacuation procedures were practised, a prudent programme probably introduced by the Sergeant guard. 12 aircraft had landed on the beach from Darwin, and enemy activity was recorded on one occasion only.

The quieter life continued on into December, with few incidents receiving mention until the 12th., when another inspection of the proposed LORAN site was made by F/Lt Chilton, the C.O. of Radar Wing, accompanied by the C.O. of 38 RS and P/O Ron Pearce, the newly arrived Technical Officer for 38 RS.

On the 19th. of the month, the C.O. and a small party located a crashed aircraft. Meanwhile, preparations had begun for Christmas at Bathurst. A 'special' celebration for the Tiwi camp helpers was arranged, badges were presented while 'on parade,' and a tarpaulin muster resulted in a collection of presents to be given as gifts to the families.

In the evening, a concert was held, and a sports meeting arranged for the following day.

15 aircraft had landed on the beach during December.

1944.

January.

As the war began to move further away from Australia, plans were implemented to instal heavy new equipment at key stations across the northern coastline of Australia, and the installation of the longer range COL Mk.V was implemented at Cape Don, Cape van Diemen on Melville Island, and at Cape Fourcroy on Bathurst Island. First though, on Bathurst came the installation of a new BL4 interrogator, and this commenced on January 10th., the equipment giving the operators the advantage of instantly recognizing any friendly aircraft because of the coded signal appearing on the radar 'blip' or echo. Also in January came a further explanation for the inspections and surveys conducted to the north of Cape Fourcroy when four USN officers arrived to inspect the proposed new camp site for the American LORAN installation - a LONG RANGE NAVIGATION aid for Allied aircraft. The giant scheme called for the installation of three stations, comprising a 'Master' and two 'Slaves,' the Master at Sir Graham Moore Island (off shore from Truscott air base) and the slaves at Champagny Island much further down the W.A. coast, and at Bathurst Island.

Towards the end of the month, the COOLEBAR and SOUTHERN CROSS arrived with the new COL equipment in the care of F/O Jordan and the installation party - also a motorised barge came to assist with the unloading of the gear which had to be off-loaded on to the beach. Unfortunately, heavy weather arrived at the same time, and great difficulty was experienced over the next ten days while the heavy equipment and steel tower pieces were brought ashore.

The first mishap occurred when the barge was swamped and then grounded with its engines now useless. Meanwhile, to escape the dangerous in-shore swells and any possibility of grounding, COOLEBAR moved out to sea. All attempts to refloat the barge over the next few days were unsuccessful, despite towlines and anchors. Eventually, a towline from SOUTHERN CROSS was attached, and sand cleared from around the barge, but despite the salvage preparations, the towline parted yet again, and further attempts were abandoned for the time being.

February. As soon as the weather permitted, COOLEBAR moved inshore again and anchored ready to unload. As the barge was still grounded, the station's raft was used to assist with the unloading until that too was damaged in the still very heavy seas. COOLEBAR left the anchorage again, leaving the landing barge still grounded, but most of the new equipment was now ashore ready to be moved up to the 'hill,' and while plans and schemes were being made to somehow transport the COL transmitter and receiver up the slope, other working parties commenced building new barracks huts down in the camp.

The landing barge was eventually refloated on the 25th.; COOLEBAR returned again and left later the same day with the barge in tow, so completing a very lengthy and difficult landing operation. Meanwhile, F/O Sanderson arrived by air during all the preliminary operations, he being in charge of electrical and power work for the new gear - also a survey team of three arrived to work on the new camp site at Weaparaly.

The most noteworthy operational activity for the month occurred on the 28th. when an unidentified surface vessel was tracked, and an 'Alert' was sounded. Extra patrols were mounted, and the 'All Clear' was sounded after some five hours.

The busy month ended with an evening's entertainment - a Quiz, community singing, and a picture show arranged by Padre Blake and 'Salvo' Major Darlow. The station complement listed was 5 officers and 52 men - which would have included the extra personnel attending during the installation of the COL.

March began with with two more 'get-togethers' for pictures and community singing, but then came word that the billabong wall had again been washed away, and work began immediately on repairs. On the 10th., another unidentified surface vessel was plotted at 46 miles - and on the next day came that rare occurrence at a radar station - a Parade was held at 0900 hours when F/Lt Nilsen handed over command of 38 RS to F/O Jordan - a holding appointment only.

F/O Sanderson, officer in charge of the electrical work, arrived by air from Darwin on the 18th., leaving again on the 20th., no doubt satisfying himself that all was going well with the new gear and its installation - and on the 28th. yet another Parade was held when command of the station was handed over to F/Lt Meckelburg. (*Very few radar stations would have suffered two parades in the one month - a truly noteworthy occasion!*) The Diary noted 11 aircraft landed 'on the beach' during March.

April began with kitchen renovations the most important job on the list of priorities for the month, with the idea of making the Cook's domain easier and cooler to work in, so keeping that very important station personality happy and comfortable. It was hoped that the Mess would also be more flyproof as a result of the alterations. And an Education Officer

arrived from Darwin to talk on various Rehabilitation schemes. At 38 RS, the carefully maintained camouflage cover had always been of prime concern, and with the changeover to COL, and with new technical huts and buildings, the camouflage cover was being renewed and extended when a strong wind tore and damaged the work. As part of the coming changeover to the new gear, the power line from the Operations Room to the camp area was completely renewed - then Mr. Goldberg the camouflage officer departed by air on the 22nd., and a Quiz and Concert evening was held 'under the stars' in the open area near the engine rooms on the 24th.

Yet another Parade was called on Anzac Day - and the men stood at the 'Present Arms' for two minutes to honor the day and the occasion. Two Filter Officers from 105 FCU who had been attached to the station for a week to gain radar experience departed by air on the 25th. to return to Darwin, and the Diary records that 10 aircraft brought personnel and supplies to the station during the month.

May commenced with a party of men detailed to attend a grass fire halfway to Weaparaly 7 miles away, and a celebration of a different kind was arranged for the 8th., - the Tiwi islanders organised a corroboree in which the camp workers took part. The station personnel were able to attend.

Two Army officers arrived on the 10th. to inspect and assess work at the new camp site at Weaparaly, and on the 11th., P/Lt Wadsley, Dr. Bowen and Mr. Iliffe of the Radio Physics Laboratory arrived to select the position for the buildings required for the 'investigation of atmospheric phenomena as applied to UHF propagation' - work that was to continue at the station over the coming year.

More 'new' work affecting the western end of Bathurst began on the 19th. when an RAN ship and two barges anchored off Weaparaly with supplies and equipment to start work on the USA Project No. 160 which was to be a 'slave' station linked to the LORAN at Sir Graham Moore and Champagny Islands. The camp and buildings were to be erected by the Australian Army Engineers. Captain Myers, USAAC, arrived on LORRINA to oversee and supervise the layout of the new project.

Towards the end of the month more essential 'new' work commenced when LORRINA arrived again with the Lister diesel generators - the ASV beacon at Mitchell Point received maintenance and attention - and Lieutenant Kornblum, USAAC, arrived by air on his way to Weaparaly.

12 aircraft landed on the beach during the month to bring men and supplies, and the station complement now was 2 officers and 44 men.

June. The station welcomed two visiting 'padres' early in June - Padre Becket, the popular Protestant chaplain, and Padre Nolan, the Catholic chaplain. And the importance of the Tiwi workers was underlined when Padre Nolan conducted two Mass celebrations on consecutive days - one for the men of the station, and one for the Tiwi islanders. At the end of the first week, precautions were taken around the camp area when yet another grass fire broke out north of the camp, and fire breaks were then burnt along the track leading from the beach to Weaparaly.

On the 10th. of the month, a Pay Clerk from 105 FCU arrived. A Pay Parade was held on the 12th. for the men, and on the 13th. for the Tiwi workers -

again emphasizing the value placed on the work of the islanders in the camp.

By mid-month, the diesel generators had been set up on their mountings, temporary switchboards had been constructed, and testing had begun. Five days later the changeover to diesel generated power was effected, and excellent results were immediately obtained from the steady power supplied. Meanwhile, HMAS BOMBO had arrived with fuel and heavy, large supplies, and once again heavy seas at the landing beach made unloading a difficult operation. But the arrival of a cinema operator and his picture show was a welcome reward for the unskilled working crew.

With the unloading completed, BOMBO departed on the 25th., after which new R/T equipment was installed, giving excellent results - presumably in communicating with 105 FCU.

11 aircraft landed on the beach during the month.

July proved a quiet month, with just a few, but significant happenings. Firstly, a building for the CSIR operations was begun and completed in one week. On the 3rd., the Technical Officer, F/O R. Pearce who had been with the station for more than seven months, departed on posting leaving only the one officer at 38 RS - and on the 16th., after a long period of 'no enemy activity,' an enemy aircraft was tracked shadowing a Beaufort bomber - it was plotted in to 39 miles before it turned to return to its base and was lost at 60 miles.

Meanwhile, CHINAMPA dropped anchor off Weaparaly to unload hut equipment and supplies, leaving again the following day.

S/Ldr Grout-Smith, the Area Radar Officer, arrived with Mr. Eagles of the Sydney Radio Physics Laboratory on the 19th., - a picture show was held on the 25th., and finally on the last day of the month an enemy recce. plane was tracked out to 97 miles. 38 RS was congratulated on locating and tracking this aircraft.

16 supply aircraft landed this month, and the station complement was now 1 officer and 36 men.

38 Radar was now settling into the quieter, watchful routine of all stations across Northern Australia. There was much air activity and plenty of plots, but all were of friendly aircraft most of which could be readily identified by IFF. There was the occasional aircraft in trouble - or lost - or lacking radio communication. And the 'Doc' - S/Ldr Clyde Fenton would sometimes deliberately attempt to test the radar efficiency of the station by sneaking into a landing at the beach in a DH 84 at zero altitude. But by and large, the station operated in regular watch fashion, with excellent results after the installation of the longer range COL Mk.V with its diesel generators.

In Darwin, 44 Radar Wing was about to be disbanded, with radar stations afterwards controlled by 105 FCU - which in turn was soon to become Air Defence Headquarters. (ADHQ). Radar personnel control and movements as well as technical responsibility for all MWA stations was to be monitored from the new Radar Headquarters.

August. "At 0900 Hours, (on August 4th.,) an event of some local historic importance took place - the hoisting of the RAAF ensign for the first time on Bathurst Island, in honour of the birth of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. A flight of airmen consisting of IAC's Eastburn, Dobbin, Jones, Irving, Major, Richardson and Mills giving the Royal Salute. The C.O., F/Lt C.R.