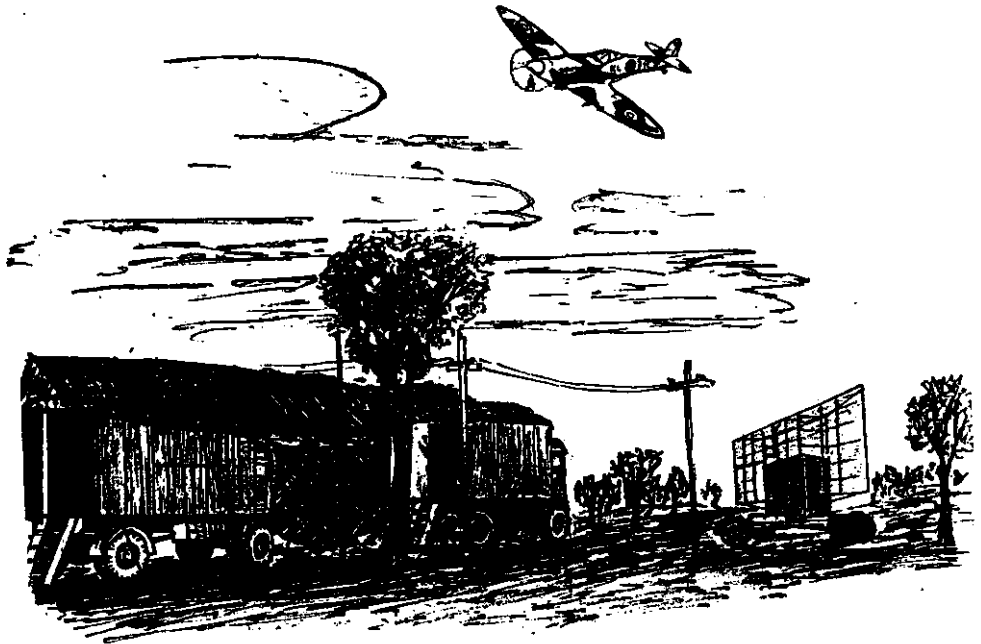


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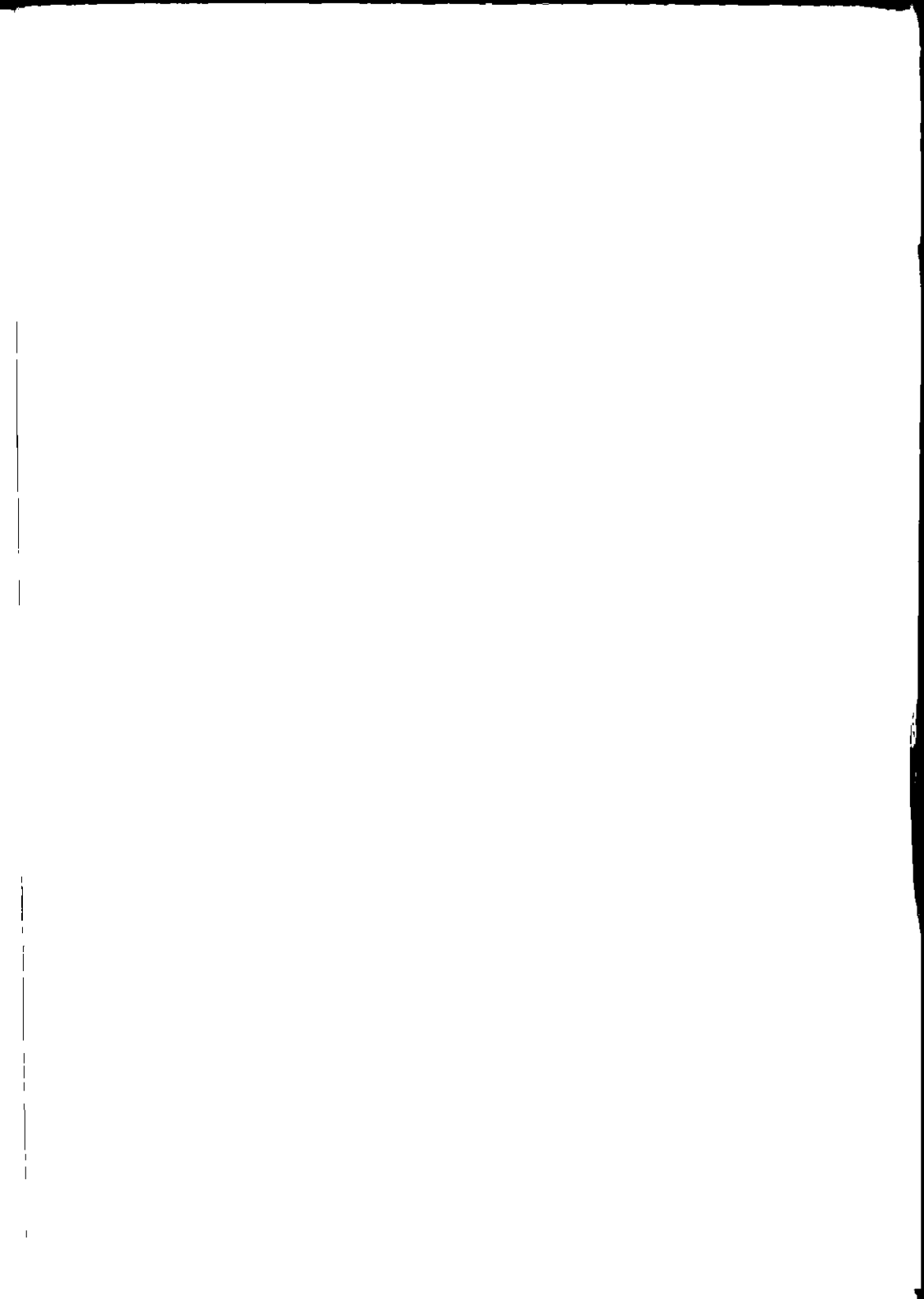
# 132 RADAR *and* 150 RADAR

*The* CROSSLEY GCI's of NWA

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*Edited by* MORRIE FENTON



*The History and Stories*

*of*

**132 RADAR**

*and*

**150 RADAR**

*The* **CROSSLEY GCI's** *of* **NWA**

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*Edited by* **MORRIE FENTON**

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132 RADAR

and

150 RADAR

THE CROSSLEY GCI's of NWA.

Edited by M.E.FENTON.

(Morrie Fenton.)

Published by M.E.Fenton

(Morrie Fenton.)

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Other Station Histories that are Currently Available:

60 Radar Melville Island,  
154 Radar Truscott.  
321 Radar Yirrkala.  
39 Radar Port Keats  
46 Radar Cape Don.  
307/61 Radar Peron Island.

#####

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

There are many who deserve 'Acknowledgement' at this time - the Radar Air Defence Branch, RAAF Assoc. N.S.W., who arranged our first National Reunion in 1988 which has led on to other reunions,(each a beauty)with Warren Mann taking over for more recent get-togethers. And our original historians, Norm Smith and Ed. Simmonds deserve thanks also, for their work has in turn encouraged others to 'have a go':- also Pete Smith whose good work continues as the unifying factor now keeping us all in touch. These folk have given us old radar chaps a wonderful and rewarding ten years.

Ed has told me that the most satisfying aspect of his work has been his ability to put old mates in touch again after 50 years - and at a guess, this has happened 20 or 30 times - probably more.

In 1944 at 13 RS Cape Otway, I first met Bob McDonnell, a Corporal Op. just back from 132 RS Darwin who impressed me then as a seasoned Op. much older than myself...he would have been at least 21 ! I next met Bob at 154 RS at Truscott, and we enjoyed meeting again, this time as tent mates.

Nothing more during the next 44 years - then to encourage me to attend the Canberra reunion, Ed gave me Bob's address and Bingo! - we both attended, and we have been mates again for the ten years since despite living 1000 kilometres apart. And so with many others I'll bet!

Bob has praised and encouraged me along the way while I prepared a series of station histories - and I being ever mindful of Bob's long and unique association with those huge old Crossleys, the 'Doover' of both 132 and 150, was careful to leave that history well alone...that was Bob's Territory! But now the end result has been effectively a joint history - I've scribbled, searched, cajoled, copied, set out and edited, but only after referral to Bob at each step. He has been the expert, for at no time did I even sight those mighty Crossleys.

So....Thanks Ed....and Thanks Bob.....you've been two very good friends.

Finally and at last, I acknowledge the help and co-operation of those listed below. This small booklet has come about hopefully as a worthwhile token of their well known stations, and of the time they spent on those stations. I hope all are pleased with the result.

I gratefully acknowledge the help of all listed below:

### Articles.

Bob McDonnell. Ev. Wade.  
George Mills.  
Eric O'Brien.  
Fred Box.  
Keith Backshall.  
Ian Grayling.  
Bryan Wardle.  
Bill Langcake.  
Laurie Norris.

### Photos.

Morrie Fenton.  
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Fred Box.  
Bryan Wardle.  
Ian Leith.  
Ken Eckley.  
Keith Backshall.

As always, 'Thanks' to the Staff of RAAF Historical, Canberra.

And 'Thanks' also to Fred Woodgate, who readily gave permission for extracts from his book, 'Lion and Swans,' to be used. Fred's book describes the actions of the 54 Squadron particularly, also some of the other Spitfire Squadrons. His address is 1151 Pittwater Road, Collaroy Beach 2097.

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# 132 RADAR

## KNUCKEY'S LAGOON

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### SIGNIFICANT EVENTS.

31 Jul 42 Unit began to form at Richmond.  
31 Oct 42 Vehicles and half of Personnel leave on WANAKA.  
09 Nov 42 Remainder of Personnel travel overland to Darwin.  
19 Nov 42 132 camp established at 11 Mile.  
24 Apr 43 Camp established at Knuckey's Lagoon near vehicles.  
18 Jul 43 Enemy plane intercepted.  
17 Aug 43 Two enemy planes intercepted.  
04 Oct 43 RWG Installation commences.  
01 Dec 43 RW/GCI operating.  
06 Dec 43 Mobile CDL packed for move.  
07 Jan 44 Personnel move to 11 mile camp site.  
31 Mar 44 RWG/GCI fully operational.  
27 Jul 44 132 Radar on Stand-by status.  
20 Oct 44 Personnel lodging at 105 FCU.  
07 Dec 45 Operations cease.  
18 Apr 46 Unit closed.  
18 Jun 46 Unit disbanded.

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## FOREWORD

When Morrie asked me to write a few memories of 132 Radar some 55 years after the events of those days, I must admit to an attack of nostalgia.

I suppose the fact that I was attached to 132 from September 1942 to April 1944 and again from October to December 1944 after it had changed its station number to 150 and moved to Adelaide River brought on the thought that I must nearly hold the record for the longest serving operator on any one station.

We youngsters quickly learned that war was not a game, and this was so clearly brought home to us at 132 with the RT speakers in the Doover telling all that was going on up above us - the exhilaration and excitement of pilots in battle coupled with disasters - even death - when all did not go their way. Brave young men from both sides being killed, and you felt by hearing all this while the Controller calmly and clearly gave directions to the fliers, that you were much closer and more involved, and always with the feeling that if you made a mistake it could have serious repercussions.

The operators on all stations became skilful at their tasks - and in fact we didn't have to ruin our eyesight trying to pick up a blip at extreme distances as did the men on the outlying stations - they just passed on the results of their good work to us at 132 and we took over from there.

To put into statistics the comments I have just made:-  
From February 1943 to November 1943, 65 Japanese aircraft were destroyed; 24 were possibly destroyed, and 49 were damaged;

And this for the loss of 57 Spitfires and unfortunately 20 brave young pilots.

And to my memory, 132 Radar was involved in some way in all the raids and recce flights during that time.

Bob McDenneil,  
132 - 150 - 154.

## INTRODUCTION.

132 RADAR began to 'form up' at Richmond air base on July 31st, 1942, and Bob McDonnell has given the best possible account of the station's early days. The big, mobile Mk. V GCI mounted on Crossley trucks with Lister diesel generating units and the aerial on separate trailers had shipped from England as part of 'Capstan' - the code word concealing the arrival of the Spitfires of No. 1 Fighter Wing which first saw action over Darwin in March 1943 - and co-inciding with the commencement of the 132 Diary - obviously 132 came 'on air' when the new fighters went into action. In the intervening months, the station had been equipping and making ready at Richmond while the operators were training, and on 31st October, half of the personnel shipped out on WANAKA from Glebe Island bound for Darwin - the remainder of the personnel travelled overland via Adelaide - this trip being recalled by Bill Langcake.

The WANAKA story is interesting. She was a New Zealand ship taken over by Australia for use by the RAAF. The ship was crewed with Kiwi officers, RAN gunners, seamen of the Merchant Navy, and RAAF wireless, medical and stores men. The ship served the RAAF well until 1946, but during her service was all but destroyed when gale force winds of 130 m.p.h. threw her onto Eden Reef on 15th. December 1943. Ten crew members were lost - and an appeal for a salvage crew went unheeded when the decision was made to try to save her. However, RAAF volunteers came forward, and the ship was saved after she limped into Sydney Harbour, listing heavily, but with the RAAF ensign flying.

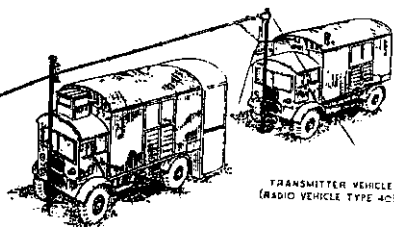
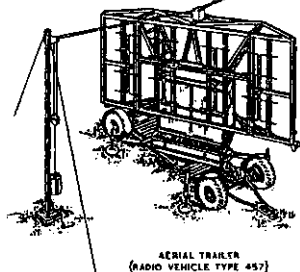
At Darwin in November 1942, the vehicles and gear were landed from WANAKA and brought to the selected site at Knuckeyes Lagoon, some 9 miles from Darwin proper, where it was carefully tested and brought up to a satisfactory working condition so that tuning, calibration and height testing could be carried out.

Early in March 1943, the announcement was made that Spitfires were now operating over Darwin.

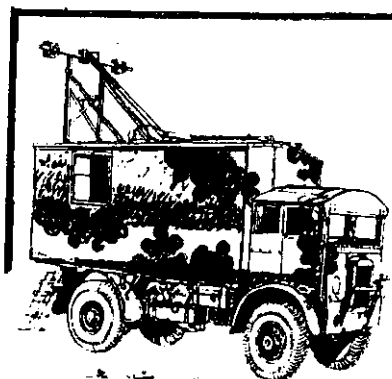
The 132 Diary commenced at the same time:-

## THE MYSTERY OF THOSE CROSSLEYS!

MOBILE GCI MKIV, GENERAL VIEW



RECEIVER AND OPERATIONS VEHICLE  
(RADIO VEHICLE TYPE 408)



**EDITOR.** Very few photos of the 'Mobiles' have survived or surfaced - none at all of the Crossleys - so the booklet illustrations have depended on recollections, plus the sketches found in magazines other than a few photos of the Internationals. This page shows an English sketch of a mobile GCI and a sketch of a Crossley radio van. From these, and from the memories and descriptions offered 'with good intentions' by ex-personnel, the illustrations in this booklet have been produced.

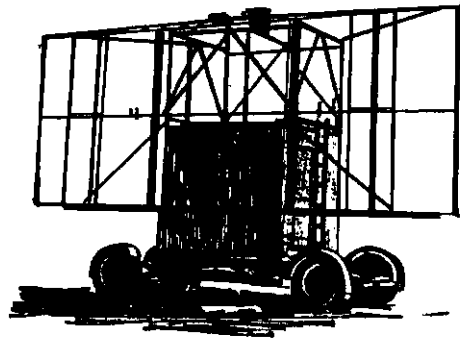
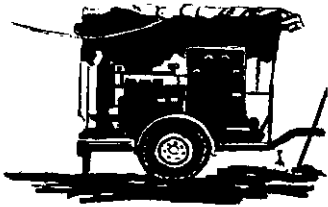
Naturally (after 50 odd years) memories and opinions have varied, and certainly the individual Doovers and vehicles also varied greatly through the war years, particularly the canvas light traps and annex ops rooms tacked on to the vehicles, just as the 'fixed' Doovers were constantly being changed and improved.

Strangely, a good idea of a Crossley van used in England has been obtained from a video, but the Australian version seems to have been somewhat different in appearance. Maybe the vans were 'built up' or altered at 1 RIMU or while on service. But most opinions seemed to favour 'hard-tops' with little ventilation. The Internationals presented few problems as I well remember the vehicles at 154 Truscott, and the photos helped a lot.

So....the sketches have been presented, hopefully, to give at least a good idea of our GCI's on wheels, but at the same time pointing out that no two memories (or Doovers) were quite the same.

My thanks to all who have helped, or who have tried to help.

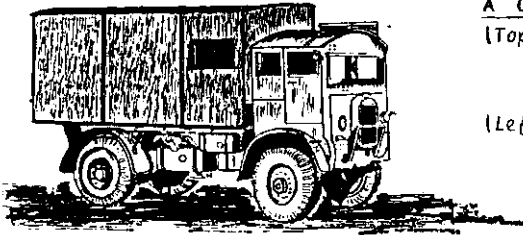
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A CROSSLEY 'DOOVER.'

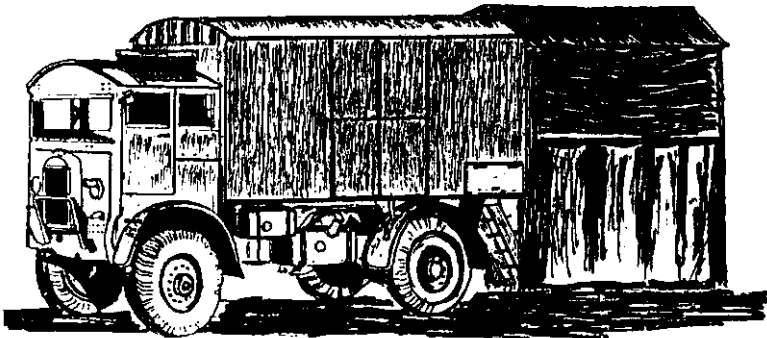
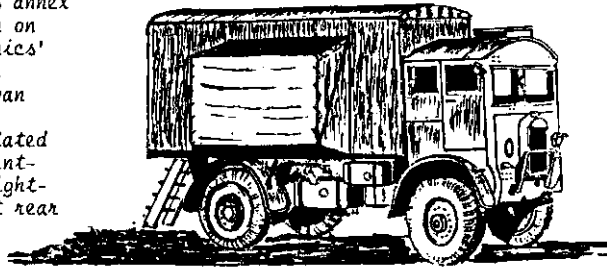
(Top) A 3 cylinder Lister generator on a 2 wheel trailer, with an older design portable aerial, probably hand turned.

(Left) Crossley tender, with unlined framed hard-top. One window in front panel.



(Right) A Tx van - insulated hard-top. Canvas annex could be let down on one side. Mechanics' bench and storage across front of van

(Below) An Rx van - insulated hard-top - fan ventilated. Canvas light-trap and annex at rear over steps.





*The first 132 camp at Darwin - the RAAF wireless station at  
the 11 mile.*



*The 132 Mess and Orderly Room at Knuckey's Lagoon.*



*The showers offered protection from the tropical rain!*

## ALL ABOARD FOR DARWIN!

Bob McDonnell.

I had been in the Air Force from the 4th. February 1942 and could easily have been a Wireless Mech or even a Radar Mech except for one important reason - after four months of theory - maths, physics etc., - the rather foolish RAAF Instructor placed a wireless set in front of me. They might just as well placed the innards of an aero engine - and to top it off they also demanded that I solder something. I think they called it a 'rat trap.' My bad luck, there was no super glue in those days!

After the usual brush with S/Ldr. Reynolds which we failures had to endure, and after being asked if we would like to see our mothers and sisters raped by the Japanese, I was 'asked' if I would like to be an RDF Operator and undergo a period of training at Richmond. As I had little alternative, I gladly accepted the suggestion, and in August 1942, along with several others, I joined Operators' Course No. 24.

We all passed....I don't think there were any failures in that one...so on 25th. September some 24 of us AC1's were posted to 132 RDF station which was then situated in a cypress copse in a corner of the Richmond Air Base.

132 was a Mobile COL Mk V which came out with the 'Capstan' or Spitfire Wing then also stationed at Richmond. There was much coming and going....Guards came and went - Mechanics, General Hands, Cooks, Clerks, Drivers, Fitter DMT's etc., all gathered under the leadership of a very new CO - P/O John Brier. He was a kind, benign 'Oldie' by our standards and very easy to get on with.

When there was a dearth of Guards, the Operators had to take their turn as the equipment was 'Top Secret' - I think we would have had to bayonet any spies as we had no ammo, and those 'spying' RAAF and WAAAF types trysting in the copse were a constant source of worry.

We were allowed to have a play with the set - uncalibrated of course - but I don't recall picking up the Jap aircraft which history now tells us were actually over Sydney about that time.

132 was quite a set-up, - Crossley trucks with the transmitter and receiver trucks each towing a Lister diesel trailer and a hand-turned aerial. We also had a Chev. panel van and also a stake-side 3 tonner with seats. We were taken to the Mess for meals and there were portable toilets. A great many of the Personnel were from NSW so the stay in Sydney suited them fine as the CO was very generous with Leave Passes.

About mid October things started to move - we were all sent home on six days' Final Leave. All returned, and on October 29th. after a big packing session most of the Personnel were given two days in Sydney and told to report to Glebe Island at 8 a.m. on 31st....again no absentees.

About half the Personnel were to travel by ship - the WANAKA - a RAAF charter ship. The CO and the others were to travel overland. The 'Expendable' and the 'Non Expendables.' The gear had by then been loaded and we sailed in the evening of the 31st. October, "Darwin Bound."

The crew of the WANAKA was a mixed lot - some RAAF - some Merchant Seamen - and some RAN gunners to man the stern gun which fired 4 inch shells. There were Mess tables and bunks with horse hair mattresses below decks, which, after hearing hair-raising stories of all the ships being sunk along the east coast, we gladly accepted their advice and put our mattresses up on deck, and brought our meals 'up.' (no pun intended.) I seem to recall that we were in the charge of a very new RAAF Officer with the name of 'Dripps' or something similar.

There was a General Hand with us - Dick Simpson - who if still alive would be a Millionaire or in gaol....he quickly produced a Crown and Anchor board and two up dice, and proceeded to make his first million. He also went on to trace in indelible pencil on the khaki Comforts Fund handkerchiefs the ports of call of that voyage. He sold them to us for 1/- each when the ship reached Darwin. Mine is now in the Archives at 3 CRU or Pt. Cook. We had to do look-out duty on the bridge extension and were shown how to fire a 'Heath Robinson' contrivance....a rocket with wire and a parachute which was supposed to tempt Jap dive bombers to collide with it and destroy themselves - but no luck.

First stop was Townsville where a light shower of rain sent the wharfies scuttling to their sheds and the Army finished the job - we had to do some moving of stuff in the hold, but I think we were more of a menace than assistance.

Next stop was Cairns where I had my first ever pint of beer 'Twice' - once down and once up!

We were all a bit intrigued by Grafton St., Cairns....Queensland seaboard towns had legal brothels and several of us went for a walk along the street - not to sample the fare but to see what a real live lady of the night might look like. No luck...they stayed inside. Probably busy.

Next stop Portland Roads. We all had to help load a lifeboat and to ferry goods ashore. The Skipper actually sculled the lifeboat with a single oar at the back...or stern rather.

Between Portland Roads and Thursday Island the look-out spotted a rubber dinghy and the ship picked up some American airmen who had been on some mission in New Guinea and had run out of fuel trying to make Townsville. Apparently no one had told them of the RAAF base at Horn Island.

Thursday Island was interesting. It was under Martial Law and lots of the shops and houses were deserted and open. One of our bright sparks had his eye on a set of barrel scales in a shop...what for nobody knows...but they remained safe and intact.

Next and last stop was Groote Island. I'll remember that one. The lifeboat again and McD weighing 125 lbs gently sank under water beneath the weight of a 180 lb bag of flour - I'll bet there were some good dampers cooked that night.

Next and last stop....Darwin!....Darwin was the REAL war! Jetties twisted and torn - sunken ships in the harbour and the NEPTUNA at the wharf - or rather its remains. The town ruined and shattered and the RAAF 'drome an absolute shambles. Things began to look really serious.

We were taken by vehicle to our new home at the 11 mile - it was a RAAF wireless station, graced by two 180' metal towers, and it had been partly fitted out by either the Dept of Works or the AWC. There was a Mess - Officers and Sergeants' quarters but all the Erks were in one very large room upstairs at just the height for the mossies to fly in, and the whole outfit appeared to be manned by a single RAAF chap called Stafford.

The gear was set up two miles closer in at Knuckey's Lagoon at the 9 mile and we were told a camp would be prepared - provided of course the war didn't end.

We had to dig our own latrines and slit trenches at the 11 mile, but the huge disadvantage was the communal living - the coming and going on shift duty by the Guards, the Operators and Mechanics at mid-night meant that few had a good night's sleep.

The Wet season was coming on by November, and the trenches began to fill up, but the most dangerous thing was that the 'Long Drops' also filled and the water was getting dangerously close to the point of departure, so another was hastily dug on a slight rise. Down at the lagoon the water began to rise, but the mobile set was well out of harm's way.

On 23rd. November some 18 bombers put on a raid and we saw one shot down in flames by a Kittyhawk piloted we now know by S/Ldr. Creswell - and so it went on. Red alerts on 26th., and 27th. November and on 20th. January 1943 with bombs dropped. About January 1943 after calibration by F/Lt. George Day, 132 was in business. There were 5 Operators on a shift of 8 hours, and you circulated through each activity - Range, PFI, Plotting, Communications and of course the inevitable hand turned aerial when half asleep you turned with one hand a rubber pedal, and the whole box and dice turned - you had voice communication and a buzzer with the range Operator. It surprised me at the time why the GCI with a comparatively short range of 100 miles worked 24 hours as it seemed to be a waste of resources, for I could not recall any instance when 132 got the first pick-up - it was ALWAYS the AW stations on Bathurst, Pt. Charles, Dripstone and later Peron Island and Port Keats that gave the first warning and alerted 132 to range and bearing.

S/Ldr. Brand, our first attached Controller, told me after the war that the CO of 5 Fighter Sector, W/Cdr. Primrose, was reluctant to let the control of the Wing go away from the Fighter Sector, and only wanted 132 as an early warning station and not as a GCI which was the reason it was there. Things changed when W/Cdr. Jeffrey came on the scene and S/Ldr. Brand who was a Controller at 5 F/S, and actually controlled at 132, was attached to the station on 31st. May 1943.

The first Controller to do an interception on 132 was S/Ldr. Peter Kingsley Strack from 5 F/S. (He was killed at Sale later in the war.)

Because there were some hairy height readings from 132 to the Wing in early interceptions - it could be whoever was on the range tube at the time - anyone of 5 on shift or anyone of 25 Operators who could be on that tube at any time. For those not familiar with the height arrangement on the COL, the height estimate was arrived at by splitting the echo and one side was taken as a proportion of the other e.g. 10:7 or 10:8 and the height was then read off on a calibrated distance chart. The reading could be greatly affected by Temperature Inversion or storms, and the Jap practice was to sit Fighter Top Cover directly over the bombers so two different heights could register for the same target. With practice, however, it was possible to read the two heights - one for the Fighter cover and one for the bombers - as the top cover stayed slightly behind and above until they got very close to Darwin and they closed up.

S/Ldr. Brand always made it clear to the Range Operator that it was better to take a reading and add 1000 feet as planes run better down-hill than up-hill! When we were able after a raid, we would compare our height readings with those of the A.A. gunners for their predictors were accurate.

Because of these sometimes inaccurate readings, Mr. Brand then picked his own crew after observing all at work or practice so that the same Operator did the same job at all times and his team came on duty when a raid was picked up by the AW stations. Oh Great Joy to the shift going on...but that was the way the Controller wanted it, and that was how it worked until the last raid in November 1943.

During one night Mr. Brand organised an exercise with two Spitfires, one of which was piloted by W/Cdr. Caldwell just to see how accurate the set and Operator were. It was a moonlit night and when we thought they were nearly touching, the W/Cdr. could not see the other plane and got him to switch on his lights. From memory, he was a mile behind and 500 feet below. It was after this that Mr. Brand and W/Cdr. Jeffrey recommended to Air Command that an A.I. set from England be fitted to a Beaufighter, as there had been several night raids but no successful intercepts. It was subsequently learned after the war that the English GCI Operator handed over to the



A.I.Operator at 3 miles.

By April 1943 our camp at Knuckeys was ready....we helped to build it with the Dept. of Works. After reading of the living conditions on other Radar Stations, 132 was luxury indeed! Reticulated water - American tents with 3 men to each - electric light - Canteen - 2 bottles of beer per man per week and even flat lolly water. Meals were much the same though - goldfish - apple jelly - M & V - tinned snags - occasional bread and meat - really the same as any Mess in the Army, Navy or Air Force. Only a short walk to the Doover - pictures each week at Berrimah at the 8 mile. Two up at the AWC camp at the 12 mile for the gamblers, and swimming at Rapid Creek Darwin, Howard River or Berry Springs, and it was always easy to get a lift as the camp was only 200 or 300 yards from the main road.

S/Ldr. Brand was a keen fisherman, and as he could always get a vehicle, he used to take us fishing in the quiet times. We then got the idea that a good net would supply the camp with fish. We carefully removed the canvas scrim from some spare camouflage netting, and with some lead sheet from the AWC for the weights, and then for the floats there were many lifebuoys around the harbour, so we cut some up and behold - a 50 yard net when the nets were tied together.

It was fairly heavy when dry, and so we duly launched it but then came the hard part - it was just too heavy when wet. We couldn't pull it in and ended up with the camp vehicles having to drag it in and nearly getting bogged. So - exit net - and no fish!

Another rather amusing incident - the canteen got in some stuff called 'coffee and milk' - it was like condensed milk with a bit of coffee mixed, but you had to get boiling water to melt the mixture and then it wasn't bad, but we had no means at night of boiling water in the tents or at the Doover. I wrote home to my father who worked for the S.E.C. and asked if he would get the electricians to make up an immersion heater that would boil water quickly.

Up it came....it looked like a jug element with a piece of flat insulation to rest on the jug and allow the coils into the water to do their work. What I hadn't told him was that our 'insulated jug' was a 7 lb. prune tin. Max Gadd, a droll Mechanic in our tent said "I don't think you should touch that tin or the water or you are not going to live to enjoy the coffee." Easily solved. For a bottle of beer the Cook at the AWC provided a milk jug. All went well except when we plugged it in...the lights dimmed and some bods reckoned the diesels stuttered as it drew so many amps.

132 was a unit on which several other radar units lodged while awaiting transport out to distant parts, so it is very difficult now to separate 'lodgers' from 'lodgees.' And as they were often allowed to join crews on the GCI for a bit of practice, it was hard to know who was who at times. Towards the end of 1943, work commenced on building a big Canadian RWG unit out in the middle of the flood plains of the lagoon. The mobile COL was due to move to Adelaide River as there had been a few raids on Fenton, but as there were the usual few problems, the old set did not move until April 1944 when the war and raids were all but over. The RWG was a dream to operate - Selsyn controlled aerial and good accurate height readings - the camouflage was excellent - a race course with the set the TAB or grandstand, and the track out just above the water was the running rail. And after the terrific heat of the set in the Crossley with 4 Operators, the Controller and sometimes the CO, we now had air conditioning.

An interesting part of a couple of the raids was a black-out in communications between 132 and Wing, and 5 F/S or 105 FCU as it now was and Wing.

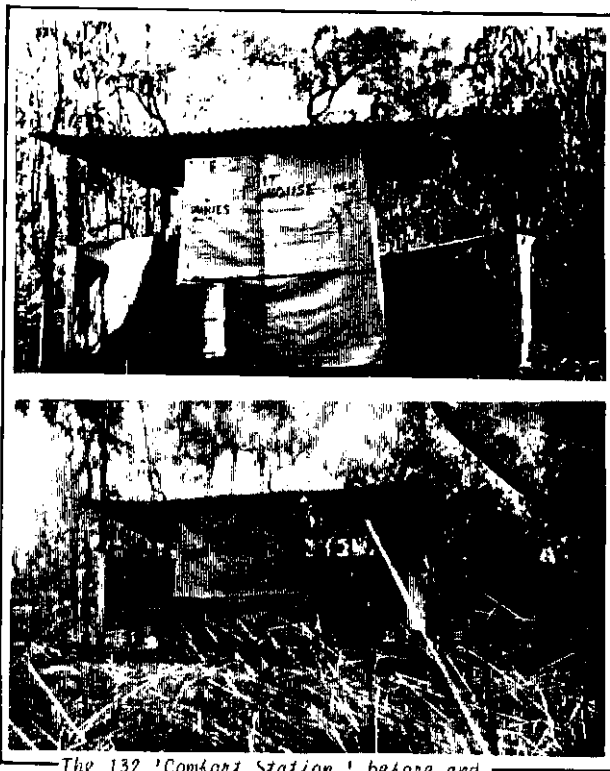
We had three RAF Wireless Mechs from 452 Sqn. seconded to us and they thought the Japs were jamming the frequency. It certainly made things difficult.

To sum up, 132 had a busy and interesting life, particularly in the first twelve months. But compared to some outlying stations it was a breeze. We were lucky....we always knew of an impending raid as the Japs had to first bring their aircraft down, and we were informed either from our own reces or from our code breaking teams.

Their reces came out of the blue of course, and again we must thank our outlying AW stations who made our life easier by issuing their very early warnings.

I think it was a happy station....one Parade only about February 1943 called by John Brier by order of 44 Wing. The usual things happened then...a wasp's nest in a rifle and an inhalation of ants in a gas mask when it was placed on. There were no more Parades thank goodness, and after reading of other stations, we were well off.

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The 132 'Comfort Station,' before and after censorship by the Commanding Officer.

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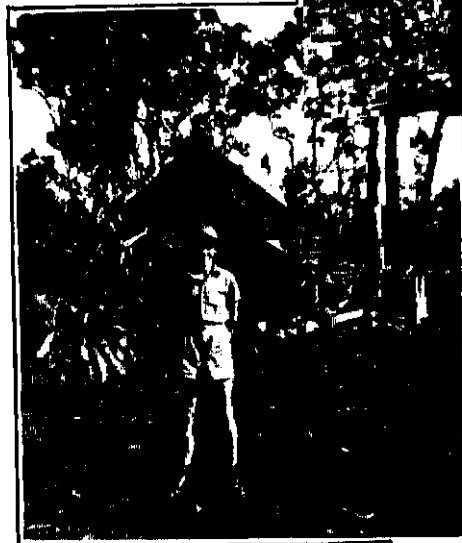
132 RADAR.

(Right.)

Ern Pascoe, R.Weekes,  
Bob Doyle,  
Bob McDonnell, M.Gadd,  
and J.Sands at Knuckey's  
Lagoon.

(Centre.)

Bob McDonnell shows his  
ability to wear two  
hats!

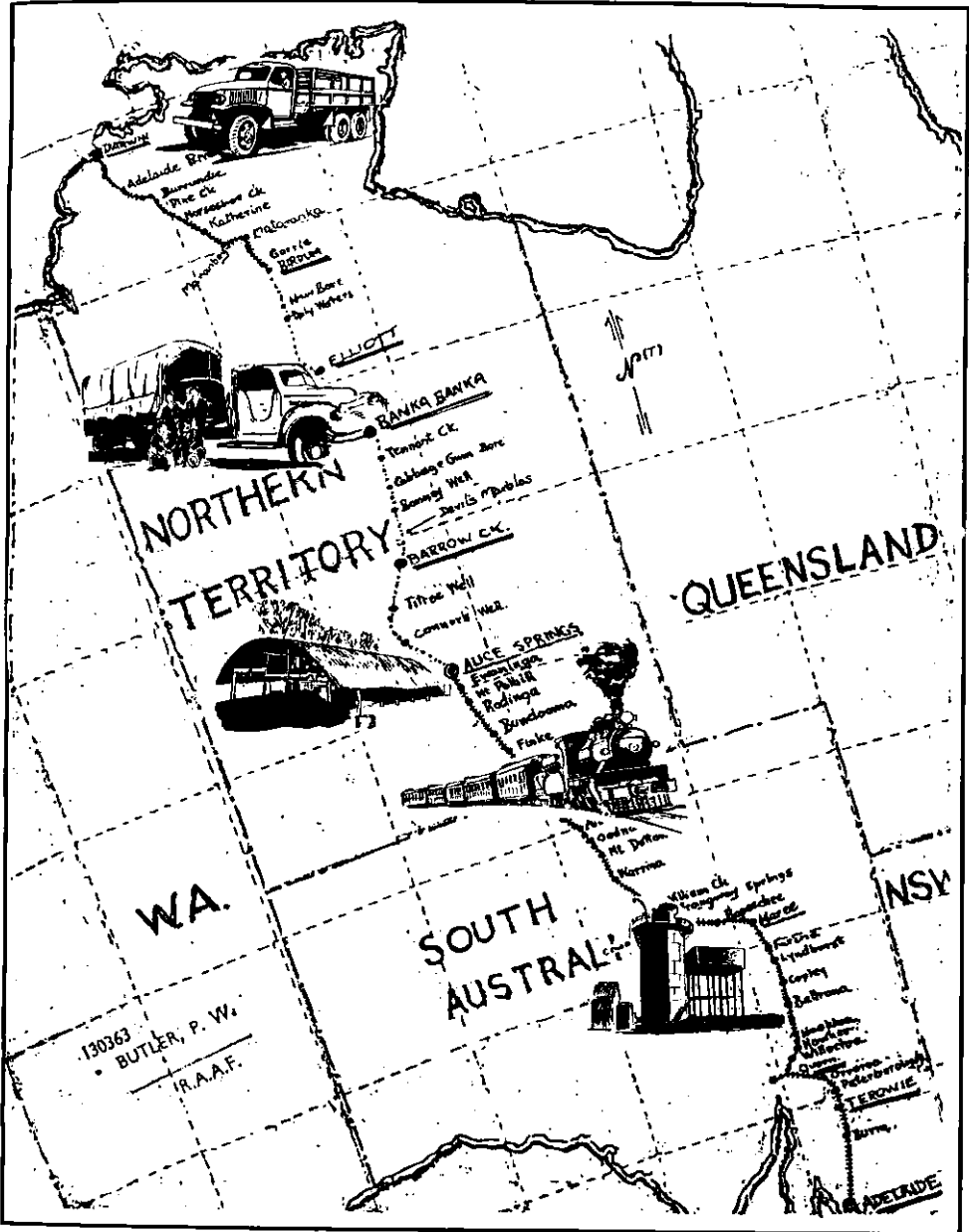


(Right.)

The Controller could  
occasionally be talked into  
using his transport to 'go  
fishing'.....

R.Weekes, S/Ldr Brand  
and Bob McDonnell at  
Howard River.





This excellent map - "Overland to Darwin" - came from Paul Butler, and has been slightly adapted only, as the original showed personal dates and destinations.

132 RADAR GOES OVERLAND. From the Diary of Bill Langcake.

With about twenty other newly trained operators fresh from Radar School, I was posted to 132 RDF in September 1942, which meant moving out to the back of Richmond Air Base where 132 was forming up. The station was highly secret and under close guard with guards constantly on duty. No one was allowed near the vehicles - but we operators were allowed to try the gear. We also learned that 132 was to become part of the Darwin Spitfire scene, many of which were in the air over Richmond every day. Our Commanding Officer was Pilot Officer John Brier.

Soon there was news of the station's move....the Crossleys and half the men were to embark on WANAKA at Glebe Island bound for Darwin, and I reported there as 'first reserve' in case anyone went AWL, but all reported on time and anxious to go; so I rejoined the men who were to endure the trip overland via the Alice.

We left Sydney on 9th. November, and travelled almost non-stop via Melbourne and Adelaide to Terowie where we entered the famous - or infamous - staging camp on the 11th, leaving again the next morning on the narrow gauge Ghan.

At first there were towns of reasonable size - Peterborough, Quorn and Hawker - and the day passed reasonably well, but the next day the scene changed as we travelled 'up track' - Copley, Farina, Marree and Curdamurka where many had a swim in the water tank to cool off and clean up a bit. It was only when the train started moving off with much whistle blowing that we all dashed back. There was no real hurry - it was a mighty slow train. A couple of times at small inclines the engine would steam on with half the train to a siding, then come back to pick up the remainder. There were some flat tops among the wagons carrying heavy machinery (probably for the A.W.C.) and at times the train was so slow we could jump off and trot alongside picking up stones and dropping them on the flat tops, then we would climb aboard and have target practice aiming at the hundreds and hundreds of bottles on both sides of the track. It helped us break the monotony a bit! On the 14th. we crossed into the N.L., and 20 miles further on over the Finke River. There were now a few Aborigines along the track, and we sighted the Table Top Mountains when we were about 120 miles from the Alice. We arrived there at 11 p.m., and slept on the sand at the side of the tracks until 4 a.m.

Hard to believe, but at 6.30 that morning, we were on the trucks and on the road - such as it was, and immediately we were coated in the red bull dust and sweat. We pushed on with lunch at Ji-tree, and staging that night at Barrow Creek. Here we received 1/3 bottle of beer which didn't even crack the dust in our throats. The 'highway' was unmade, dusty and bumpy, and each truck stirred up more dust for those following it. Work was proceeding on sealing, and when we encountered one of these sections, the trucks ploughed through the bulldust at the side with thicker and thicker clouds of dust. But there were some things that impressed - the underground bores with hot water surging out - the Devil's Marbles and the Salvo utes.

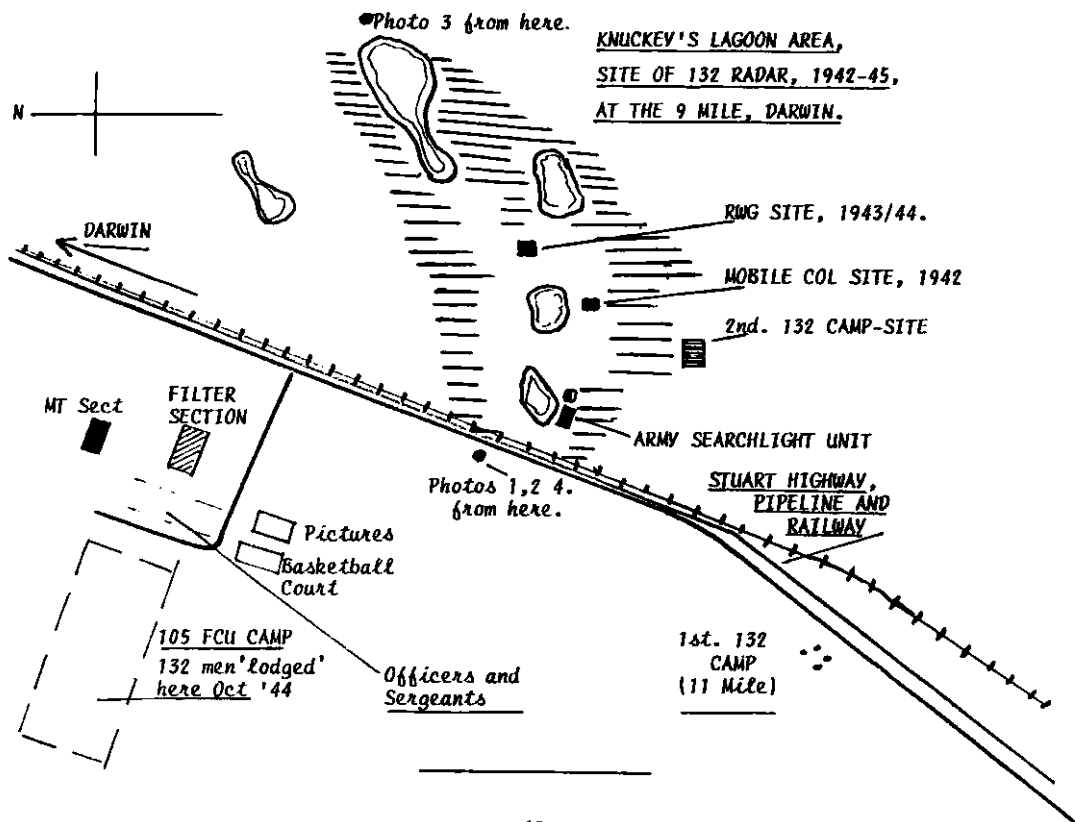
For some reason, Tennant Creek was out of bounds to troops, and we filled up with good water 10 miles further out, and that night - the 16th. - we staged at Banka Banka. The 17th. was an easy run to Elliott which was a good camp where we rested a bit and could do some washing. The day following we were at Larrimah with a few jobs in the morning, and after lunch we left by rail in open trucks for Darwin, passing through Katherine and sleeping in the trucks on the train, a far from comfortable night with soot and smoke pouring in over us.

We arrived at Adelaide River at 8.30 a.m., and had some breakfast at a camp, then a swim in the Adelaide River. We were back on the train again after lunch....and so we arrived at a camp 3 miles from Darwin at 4.30 p.m. after 11 days of travel from Sydney. Immediately after de-training, we were moved by tender 4 miles or so back along the road to the 132 camp past Berrimah where the unit was already settling in - a wonderful place beyond all expectations. We had our first air raid warning that night at 11.30 p.m. but there was nothing doing near us.

During the day a couple of us had climbed to the top of the steel masts at the camp (this had been the RAAF Wireless Station at the 11 mile) and as the authorities wanted the place to appear unoccupied, we had to remove all signs of habitation such as washing on the clothes line when any air raid warning sounded.

Over at Knuckey's Lagoon, the Crossley trucks and equipment were being set up, and in a matter of days the testing started.

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KNUCKEY'S LAGOON - 1992.

THE WAR TIME SITE OF 132 RS.

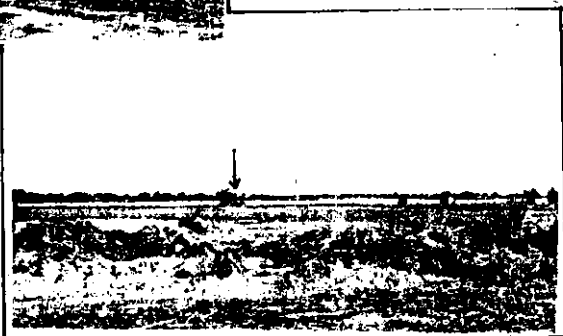
1.



(Top)  
The 132 camp in the bush  
along the side of the  
lagoon area.

(Right)  
The RWG Doover site.

2.



(Right) L. to R.  
The Mobile COL site.  
The camp site in the bush.  
The RWG site.

3.



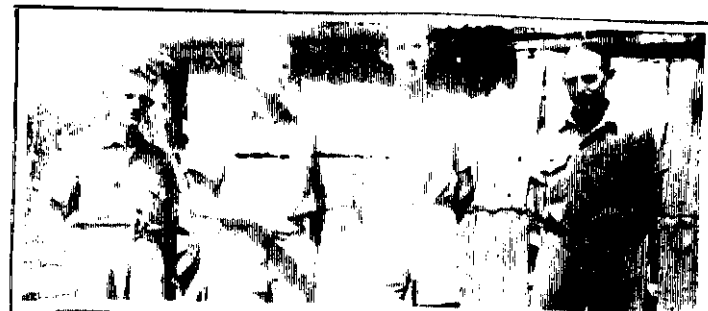
(Below)  
The Army searchlight site  
was next to the road.

4.



132 RADAR.

(Top Right.)  
Les Duthie.  
Bill Langcake.  
Alec Panelli.  
Harold Bignett.



(At Right)

Ern. Pascoe,  
M.Gadd,  
Bob McDonnell,  
R.Weekes,  
R.Cruikshank.



(At Right)

7'2" python killed in the 132 camp.  
An extra long photo to show it all!  
Also in the photo are W.McMillan,  
- Muir, R.Weekes and - Harding.



(Below)

"Christmas is coming and the geese  
are getting fat!"







GCI Team at 132....from left - G.McGarvie - J.Sands - R.Cruickshank -  
S/Ldr. Brand - J.Bryan - R.McDonnell.

#### A DAYTIME RAID ON DARWIN.

Bob McDonnell.

132 RDF - 20th. June 1943. F/Lt. Brand and his crew of Ops. were on standby on this day as there had been a recce over two days before - then on the 19th. came the warning of a large concentration of Jap planes on Timor - they always moved them south when preparing them for a raid. This was to keep them safe and away from any danger of a precautionary raid from Darwin based bombers.

F/Lt. Brand (later a Squadron Leader Controller) always was on standby when a raid was expected - also his preferred GCI team with R. Cruickshank on the PPI - J.Sands on Communications with 5FS - G.McGarvie on the Plotting Board - J.Bryan out on the Manual Aerial (a mighty lonely job at these times) and R. McDonnell on Range and Height. When operating, the PPI Op called the compass bearing from the station - the Range Op called the distance and height - the Plotter calculated the Grid Reference position which was relayed to FS and recorded. On the 132 Mobile Mk.V COL, the distance was considered accurate to about 3 miles, but height was fairly primitive. The echo was split, and the right hand echo was estimated as a proportion of the left - e.g. - R.10. L. 7½.....R.10. L.8. etc., then the Operator's chart gave an estimate of the height. The chart was the result of calibration flights with an aircraft radioing its height and the station recording the range, and the readings made the basis of the chart. Readings were considered accurate to about 2000 feet, but could be misleading whenever T.I. was present.

But the most misleading estimates could be made during a big raid when for instance, the Japs had bombers at say 26000 feet, fighter cover at 30000 feet directly above and slightly behind, and then more fighters at about 32000 feet. These all showed on the screen as one huge blip, virtually impossible to separate or accurately estimate.

So at about 9.30 a.m. on this day we were warned by 5 FS that 38 RS on Bathurst had given warning of a fairly large raid. 132 picked them up at about 100 miles, and by their slow speed we advised that they were climbing and to expect bombers with fighters slightly behind and about 4000 feet above.

Some 40 plus Spitfires were 'Scrambled' and Vectored to intercept near Melville Island where we heard the 'Tally Ho' from the Wing leader who then took over, and eventually we lost them in the ground pulse about 5 or 6 miles away. There were about 21 bombers and the same number of fighters, so we heard afterwards.

F/Lt. Brand was passing information to the Wing leader, but the Japs kept their formation very tight. We heard heavy explosions as bombs were dropped - and we heard the regular 'Crump' of the heavy AA boys who put up a box barrage - and so with the Spits diving among the Japs - and the AA fire, it was fortunate there were no casualties among our own fighters that day.

Then came a real surprise. Nine light bombers (I think they were Dinahs) came in at sea level, apparently lifted over 31 RS at Dripstone who apparently missed plotting them too - then screamed at low level over RAAF Darwin strafing as they went - then out and gone before anyone realised they had arrived..... meanwhile all our Spitfires were high up and still busy chasing the bigger game.

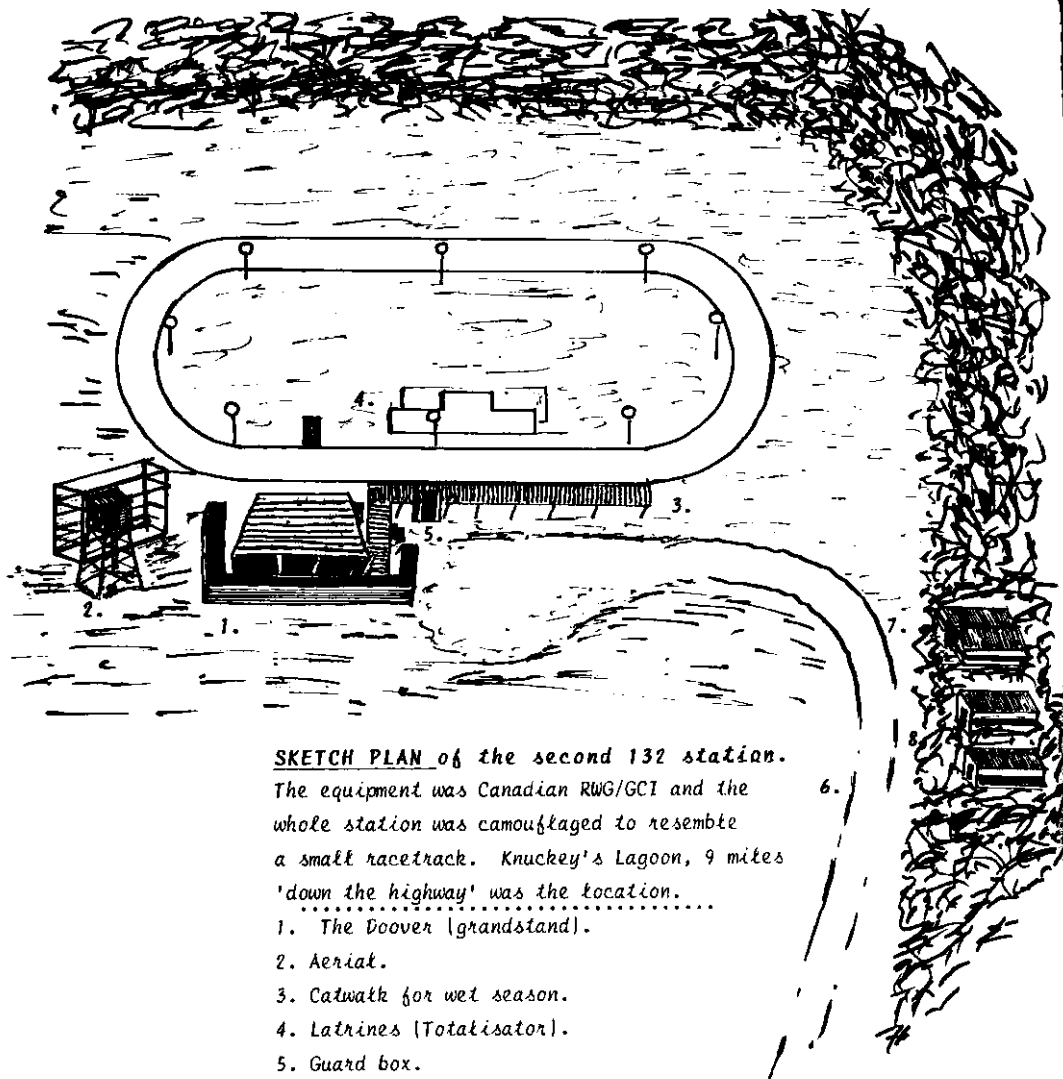
Subsequently I found out there were 21 heavy bombers, 9 light bombers, and 21 fighters. Some 14 of these were destroyed and several more damaged, while our losses were 2 fighters. The IFF on the Spitfires made easy the job of identifying them on the GCI, but there was interference on the radio between Fighter Sector, 132 and the Wing Leader which our RAF Wireless Mechanics blamed on the Japs - there was apparently some way they could tell.

It was always a great worry to us that the height reading we passed to the fighters might put them in a position where they could be 'jumped,' so we tried to play safe and put them high, for it was much easier to dive than climb with engines we now know were clapped out. It has come to light that Air Board in its wisdom sent NEW Spitfires to OTU Mildura for the trainee pilots - afterwards sending them on to Darwin. Talk about doing things back to front!

But a great advantage was the advance warning of a raid given by the Bathurst Island and Peron Island stations. They were always 'on the ball.'

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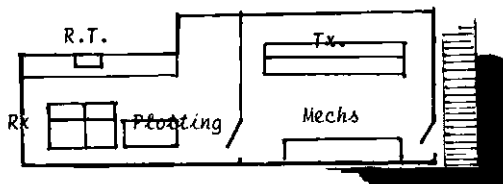




SKETCH PLAN of the second 132 station.

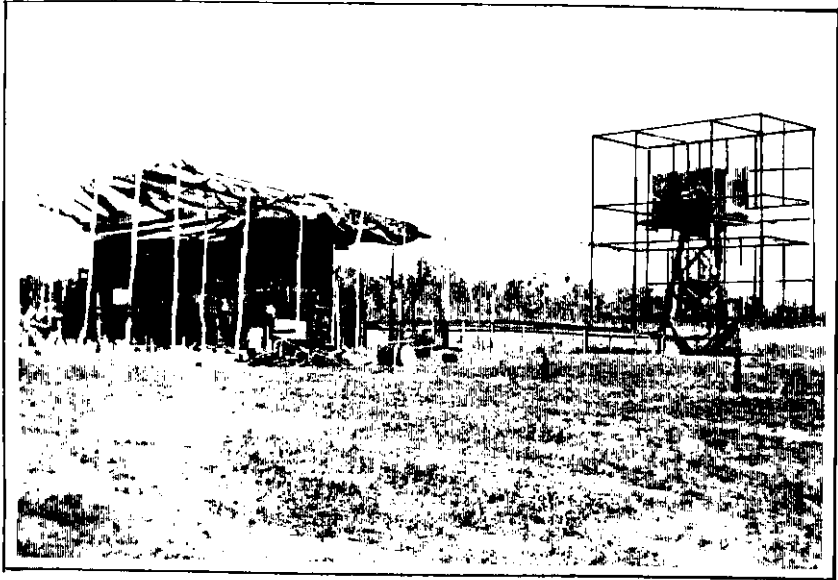
The equipment was Canadian RWG/GCI and the whole station was camouflaged to resemble a small racetrack. Knuckey's Lagoon, 9 miles 'down the highway' was the location.

1. The Doover (grandstand).
2. Aerial.
3. Catwalk for wet season.
4. Latrines (Totalisator).
5. Guard box.
6. Track from highway.
7. Diesets.
8. Guards' camp.



Approx layout of Doover.

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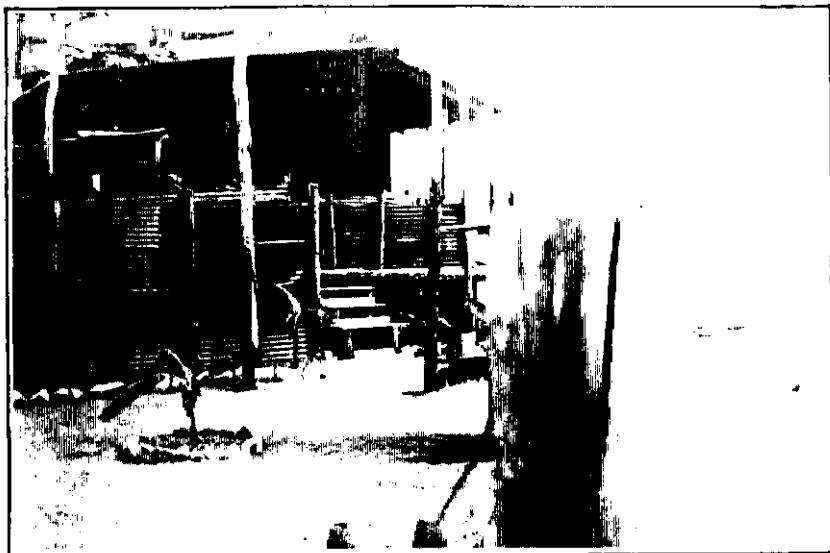
132 Radar, Mk. II .... The big RWG that replaced the Mobile Mk.V.

When I was posted to 132 in November 1944, the station appeared to me to be split into at least three sections - possibly four. First I was introduced into the 132 sleeping hut and allotted a bunk in a large, airy hut sleeping ten or twelve men. The side walls were of louvred sisal - the floor of malthoid. There was a doorway at each end but no doors or windows, and each bunk was adorned with the standard issue mosquito net. The hut was but one of many in the lines of huts and tents at 105 FCU, but the distinguishing '132' sign above the doorway was sufficient to ensure exemption from the rules and regulations, the parades and what-have-you of 105 FCU, not to mention the chores and fatigues of the place which were carefully supervised by their Sergeants.

Meals were also 'enjoyed' at the 105 Mess - and the big Rec hut, the Post Office, and the Canteen were all pretty good facilities too, as well as the weekly picture show and the games at the basketball court. So much for the advantages of 132 lodging at 105 FCU.

The Doover was further down the road a mile or so at Knuckey's Lagoon - a queerly camouflaged two room asbestos building on concrete stilts out on the flood plains, with the huge box kite aerial some 30 yards in front. In the wet season when the lagoon waters rose up around the Doover, access was only possible by a raised catwalk; but in the dry the truck could pull up to the Doover itself, the surrounds of which were carefully camouflaged to appear as a small race track of some sort, with furlong and winning posts, running rails, tote, and with the Doover evidently meant to appear as a grandstand of sorts. An air-conditioning unit was meant to provide an even temperature for the gear - but seldom did - and the area under the Doover, well sheltered by the blast wall, provided a cool sanctuary much favoured by the men as alternative sleeping quarters, and several wire bunks were available there.

Over in the scrub at the end of the catwalk was the Guards' camp and the engine shed housing the big Caterpillar diesel generators. This apparently was the site of the early 132 camp. The Guards drew their rations from 105 FCU and more or less lived permanently at their camp while providing



*132 Dover, about September 1945, and some evidence of Ed. Harges' gardening efforts can be seen. Nose cones of demolition bombs in foreground.*



*Ed. Harges, Bob Doyle, Controller 'Nelson' Eddy, Stan Crichton and Jack Parkinson.*

the necessary 24 hour presence around the Doover where a small guard box was set up.

The Fitter and his truck seemed a rather separate and independent part of 132. The Caterpillars were his big concern, and much time was spent in the engine shed - the station power house - over in the bush near the Guards' camp where the station motor transport was often checked and maintained. Mechanical adjustments and repairs were attended to at the big 105 MT section. The FitterDMT and his always well kept transport provided the regular 'three times a day' courier service between 105 and the 132 Doover delivering the shift workers, and collecting 'end of shift' men at the set times so that all men other than the Guards could 'Mess' at 105 and also adhere to the Roster times at the Doover.

In the Doover itself were the Transmitter and Mechanics' room and the Receiver or Operations room, mostly known as the Ops room. There was the receiver gear, the big plotting board, and a bench for the Recorder log book, a switchboard and the AT5/AR8 which provided an R/T link with 105 which normally was direct via the Operators' phones and landline to 105. Set in the wall was a loudspeaker through which came the R/T responses from the Flight leader of the Spitfires or the fighters being directed from the console by the Controller.

Finally there was the 132 Orderly Room, which I seem to recall occupied a small section within the 105 Orderly Room.

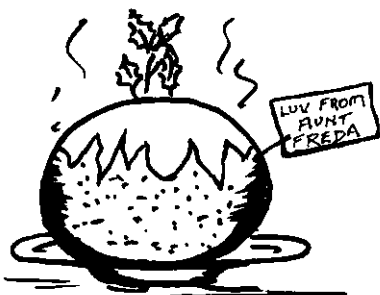
This then was the 132 set-up as I recall it when I arrived, and by the end of 1944 the Doover had become something of a show place with many visitors viewing the gear or practice interceptions which were rather mysterious demonstrations of the most sophisticated radar gear in Darwin.

During my second stint at 132 beginning about May or June 1945, a water pipeline was laid from the old Army searchlight station by the road, and so we had showers and a tap, and besides the bunks underneath the Doover, there was now a bunk in the Rx room so that the Duty Operator of the night could sleep, only being disturbed if a phone call dropped a shutter, setting off an alarm bell.

As the station was still on 24 hour standby, the personnel usually had quite some time to fill in, for the practice interceptions and demonstrations took up no more than 3 or 4 hours each day. Plenty of reading and letter writing took place, and provided there was an Operator in the Ops room at all times, the others could spend time outdoors. One Operator had fitness in mind, for he would do a few laps of the racecourse. A well known F/Sgt. Mechanic tidied up the surrounds with some gardening and stone border work. One Operator constructed a weird device he called a 'chuffer' which burnt a mixture of dieseline and water and generated sufficient heat to melt dural to pour into various moulds. And there was always the wildlife show to watch in the late afternoons when the wallabies ventured into the open to spar and play.

There were the brews, the talks and the smoko's of course - but by far the most popular location was the Mechanics' bench where up to three could work, shaping and constructing 'foreigners,' - pearlshell, tortoise-shell, perspex and even small silver objects made from the coins of the day. Time never dragged - rather the reverse, for additionally in the 'off shift' periods, it was easy to thumb a ride into Darwin, or Mindil, or East Point or down to Berry Springs or 224 at Bagot Road. At night there were the RAAF Darwin pictures, or the Larrakeyah or Parap picture show. Life was O.K. considering.

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#### CHRISTMAS WITH 132 RADAR, 1944.

Our festivities began about 7.30 on Christmas Eve. We all had received parcels, cakes and hampers, though many were gone before Christmas. There were a few in reserve though, and these were produced from their many hiding places, and cleaned of cockroaches and ants ready for supper.

The hut was decorated with palm fronds, ferns and leaves, and the effect was very tropical...and so in these very pleasant surroundings, we settled

down to a quiet, cool evening of talking, spinebashing, study and letter writing.

Our 132 hut was one of about 20 in the 105 FCU lines, I suppose, and all was quiet for nearly an hour when Russell Jack decided it was time to go to the cookhouse for his lemon jelly, 2 pint size; and our first supper comprised jelly, pears and the usual condensed milk. About this time some unknown hero of the hut lines set off the station hooter, and fully five minutes passed before it was silenced. By this time the hut lines were in an uproar with cries of 'Invasion - Air Raid - Santa's coming etc' - and everyone seemed to become bright and happy. Our former C.O., F/Lt. Craigen, RAF, arrived shortly afterwards with his stalwart comrade-in-arms, F/Lt. Buchanan, RAAF. Both had reached a state of benign intoxication where they considered themselves, in their own words, 'a pair of so-an-so fine so-an-so's.'

They produced a couple of bottles of wine - "Just a little Christmas drink for youse chaps," and of course we couldn't refuse this convivial and friendly gesture. Soon we were drinking each other's health, making speeches, and telling the corny old jokes in the best manner possible.

Naturally, as time went by, our two officer types appeared ready to fall into each other's arms and have a good cry; their jokes became as muddled as they were, but we all did the right thing and laughed.

Paul Kloeden and Arthur Whatmore had by this time returned from the swy ring, and after a few more drinks to celebrate their wins and losses, The Pudding was carried in. Now this Pudding was the King of all Puddings, made by Auntie Freda for her dear nephew Russell, and contained three-penny bits, brandy and a fine mix of fruit. Auntie Freda was toasted by all as a 'dam' fine cook,' and it was certain that no more popular aunt ever existed than Aunt Freda during the sampling of her pudding. At this stage there was a bit of an interruption when a very unsteady and sweaty personage appeared at the door, blinked at the light, and demanded of no-one in particular: "Ish thish 132 'ut?" "Did you get thruppence?" politely asked F/Lt. Craigen in his very best Pommy, no doubt thinking of his good fortune with his last mouthful of Freda's pudding.

"Ish my friend Tom 'ere?" (Tom was our FitterDMT.)

"I got sixpence!" (said with emphasis designed to impress.)

"I've got fivepence, thash all, B.... you!" and the intruder vanished in the night, still calling for "My friend Tom."

The F/Lts. eventually retired with all the officer type dignity and decorum they could muster, whilst I, following them outside, was surprised to see a few fights, a couple of choirs, and one unfortunate individual who had obviously lost his hut and had fallen asleep in the middle of the track.

I returned to find that our Sgt. Op Russ. Balmer had now arrived in what can only be described as a very inebriated and befuddled state of mind. Naturally,

drinks and toasts started all over again, between which he did his best to impress on Paul, our S.P. bookie, the importance and necessity of him backing Busybody in the races on Tuesday:

"Now Paul, I haven't any money, but I'm expecting a reg - registered letter, Pa.. Paul ...you know, registered, so don't forget Paul, five bob I want."

"Here Russ, have a drink."

"No thank all the same...I brought mine with me." and delving deep into his shirt pocket, he brought to light an almost full glass of beer, which he had transported thus all the way from the Sergeants' Mess.

That more or less broke up the evening, and we retired soon afterwards, though the sounds of revelry continued long into the night.

Christmas morning revealed many strange sights. One bomb, an ornament from the parade ground, was attached to the top of a telegraph pole while its mate was hanging from the flagpole where usually the RAAF ensign flew. The station hooter had totally disappeared - and most of the chaps looked distinctly the worse for wear. I think Santa was too frightened to visit - there was nothing in my sock on Christmas morning.

Our 132 Radar group sat down to dinner 12 strong in the Sergeants' Mess, complete with Sergeants to wait on us all. The waiter for our table was W/O Ashdown, the DWO of 105 FCU.

Dinner was really splendid, lasting in all over an hour; but it did seem strange eating such excellent food out of my two old dixies. The menu offered little selection, but the lack of choice detracted in no way from the quality. Fish soup, poultry, ham and veg, plum pudding, fruit and nuts, and a bottle of cold beer per man. Who could ask for better.

We had no complaints about our waiter either, and altogether with returns we enjoyed 19 bottles of beer, and a few bottles of lolly water.

Afterwards the whole group decided to collect the mail and relieve 'the boss' at the Doover where he had been standing by 'on call.' And so, with much singing and another half dozen of the best, we set off for 132 Ops room, down the highway a few miles at Knuckeyes Lagoon.

F/Lt. Craigen greeted us from the door, and gathering together on the tray of the truck which incidentally was describing a tight circle at about 40 m.p.h., we all sang that well known ditty which commences:-

"Farewell Mr. Craigen, Farewell 132,  
Since we've been at Darwin,  
We've been messed about by you.  
The Air Force is a failure, and Radar is a farce,  
And as for interceptions, you can.....

A rather stunned Mr. Craigen was somehow persuaded to have a few drinks, and of course...everyone was toasted. Then returning to our quarters again, we more or less went our own ways.

Tea was much the same as any other meal. There were a few more visits, a few more toasts. We started a sing-song accompanied by me on a concert flute which turned up from someone's kit. The attempt at a spirited rendition of 'The Messiah' seemed to signal the end of the Christmas festivities.

#####

(Slightly altered from a story written in 1947)



\*\*\* AUTOGRAPHS \*\*\*\*\*

*W. J. ...  
P. ...  
S. ...  
W. ...*

..ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE..



AIR MEN'S

DANCE.

A.P.-H.Q.  
DARWIN. N.T.

...RECREATION HALL



\*\*\* PROGRAMME \*\*\*

1. FOX TROT.
  2. FROG. BARN DANCE.
  3. FOX TROT - SLOW.
  4. MODERN WALTZ.
  5. FOX TROT.
- S U P P E R.
6. FOX TROT - SLOW.
  7. BRIDE OF ERIN.
  8. FOX TROT.
  9. GYPSY TAP.
  10. MODERN WALTZ.

## THE BOYS OF 132 GO DANCING.

Even 'down south,' the more isolated radar stations on lonely capes and islands were regarded as 'non suitable' for the WAAAF Radar Operators and Officers. But those lucky stations which were located not too far from civilization were more likely to be favoured with a bevy of lassies who undoubtedly added a touch of class and gentility to a radar unit.

Fortunate indeed was the radar man posted to a so-called WAAAF station - a privilege not enjoyed by too many - and WAAAF's certainly did not form part of the personnel at any of my stations. But I still have faint memories of a social occasion at Darwin when the ladies attended, and 132 Radar was able to appear in strength....the night of the Airmens' Dance at ADHQ..... and the ladies were there though not in adequate numbers.

The 8th. August 1945 it was, and 132 Radar was there in force, and so too were all the plotters, telegraphists and every other type from ADHQ except officers. Just one week exactly before V.J. Day. But I can assure you there were no victorious conquests that night. The occasion was the one and only Airmens' Dance, and it seemed like there were hundreds there. Probably about 100 I suppose really, and 20 or maybe 30 girls from the Army were brought along. And to make sure the Air Force didn't ruin them, they were under guard all night, and there were armed S.P.'s and M.P.'s everywhere you turned.

I forget who arranged it - maybe it was the Welfare Officer or the Padre - but those girls sure were guarded like Vestal Virgins.

We 132 chaps put on a real good show - we polished our boots and bleached our webbing belts. We chose our cleanest and finest shirts and our best strides - slicked our hair with the communal Brylcreem, and off we went to the Rec. Hut.

The place was fairly bulging with those chivalrous and gentlemanly radar chaps we were known to be...but truth to tell, there were all too few ladies to be chivalrous and gentlemanly to. And every few feet it seemed there there was a huge S.P. or M.P. with revolver almost at the ready. Once through those doors, that's where you stayed - or else "Out you go mate and stay out!"

I'll swear that every girl had an anxious and freely perspiring queue of airmen waiting for a dance, and the really lucky or favoured ones were able to escort them to the supper table; or rather push them through the overheated mob, for shirts were buttoned up to the second button and kept that way, or "Out you go mate and stay out!" as before.

The old honky tonk piano thumped away valiantly all night, and a few other dance band types who had a sax or trumpet had been recruited from somewhere. Those old war-time favourites were on the programme just like the Cheer Up huts down south - a Barn Dance; Pride of Erin; Gypsy Tap, Foxtrot; and Modern Waltz. The lights were not turned down for that last dance I remember, and I recall the strongest drink all night was Lolly water. The girls had glasses to drink it from, but I can't recall whether we drank from the bottle or from our half pint pannikans.

What a night of romance! Thwarted romance rather! Nine months it was since I'd even seen a girl, and here I was shouting in the ear of one to make myself heard above the noise of the mob all deperately trying to make small talk to the nearest girl. A couple even signed my souvenir programme to prove I'd had some success. Susy Peters and Win Morris...Where are you? And after that last dreamy Modern Waltz which was more like an 'Excuse Me' marathon, did we get to escort the lovely ones home?

Well that was the only time when we weren't told to get out and stay out. We stayed inside under guard while the girls were driven home with those M.P.'s watching over them. But it was the talk of 132 for weeks.

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'LION AND SWANS.' Fred Woodgate's excellent book on 54 Squadron.

The Spitfires which defended the N.W. Area were a joint RAF and RAAF force. The Squadrons which arrived in Australia were No. 54(F) Sqdn RAF and Nos. 452 and 457 Sqdns RAAF, and these units successfully defended Darwin in 1943. When it was decided to pursue the enemy to the north, Sqdns 452 and 457 were deployed to Morotai and Borneo, their place in Darwin being taken by Sqdns 548 and 549 RAF which had formed in Queensland. In his book, LION and SWANS, Fred Woodgate has collected reports and comments from several reputable sources, so giving the best possible description of the days when the Spitfires first saw action over Darwin; and his comments add considerably to the one or two lines entries in the 132 Diary. This gives a much better idea of the outcome of any action. With Mr. Woodgate's consent, brief extracts from his book are noted, but only in sufficient detail to enlarge on the 132 Diary note. The Spitfires first saw action in February 1943 when a Dinah was destroyed north of Cape Van Diemen, and the 132 Diary commences in March. The brief extracts from LION and SWANS are printed in Script type, and are also marked with an asterisk.\*

#### THE STORY OF 132 RADAR FROM THE A50 DIARY.

The first few months of Darwin operations for 132 Radar were surely very busy as the equipment was calibrated, tuned, then tuned again ready to go 'on air' 24 hours a day, but unfortunately the A50 records for this first period have either been lost or were not written up, for the Diary does not commence until March 1943. We do know that after all the preliminary trials and tests, 132 Radar was operating as both GCI and as a 'search' station - and that many of the early interception attempts were controlled by S/Ldr. Strack, also that the station, with a range of about 100 miles, was often brought on alert after early long range plots had been picked up either by 38 RS on Bathurst, or 39 RS at Port Keats, or 105 RS at Point Charles.

#### March 1943.

On the 2nd, the enemy attempted to strafe Coomalie, and 132 RS was on the job and located the intruders:-

*\*Fine weather for most of the day and exciting doings. An enemy raid of about 12-15 aircraft, probably Kates escorted by Zekes, and were intercepted on the way out. A combat took place over the sea about 30 miles W.N.W. of Charles Point. Two Zekes and a Kate were destroyed. No casualties on our side, but the C.O.'s aircraft had machine gun damage to radiator and glycol system.*

An enemy recce plane was over Darwin on each of the following two days. Both were plotted by 132, but no interception took place.

On the 7th. a recce was again over the town and a successful interception was controlled by 132:-

*\*A fighter pilot of 457 Squadron got a Jap recce, probably a Dinah today, not far from Darwin, and we had the pleasure of seeing it falling in flames into the sea near Lee Point. The Navy managed to salvage a few bits and pieces including a note book which may prove informative. The interception took place at 15000 feet, and 15 miles north of Darwin.*

F/Lt. R.W. Wadsley, C.O. of 44 RDF Wing, visited 132 on the 8th. and the 15th; and also on the 15th. a big raid took place which was plotted by 132:-

*\*A big Japanese raid this morning consisting of 22 bombers and an unknown*

number of Zeros escort. The formation coming over in bright sunlight was very reminiscent of the Battle of Britain, and most of us had not seen such a sight since that time. In the dogfight which took place over Darwin Harbour, the following results were obtained:- three Zeros, one probable and two damaged. Bombers-one probable afterwards confirmed; and one damaged We lost two aircraft and one damaged.

A 'lodger' radar unit at the 132 camp - 307 RS - left for its new site on Peron Island in Anson Bay on the 17th, but its place was taken the following day by 46 RS which also then 'lodged' with 132 which, over the next few days was detached from NWA H/Q to become attached to the newly formed 44 RDF Wing at Coomalie. The separate and independent Wing was able to attend to the administration of the radar stations and to their needs in stores and spares in far better fashion than NWA H/Q. 46 RS was destined for Cape Don and the first party of men departed for the new site on 31st. March, 1943.

Other visitors this month besides F/Lt. Wadsley from Wing were G/Cpt. Wiggins, W/Cdr. Davies and S/Ldr. Caddy.

#### April 1943.

The second party of men for 46 RS Cape Don left for their new station on the 2nd. April - then activities were fairly quiet until the 19th when the station helped track an enemy recce over Darwin.

The 24th. was a big day for 132, for the move from the 11 mile to Knuckkeys Lagoon commenced. The general opinion was that the new camp was very comfortable and convenient, with three men to each bell tent - power was connected to the camp, and there was a roomy Mess-cum-Rec hut. The best factor was that the camp was only a short distance from the Doover.

The 26th. April was another noteworthy day, with a visit from W/Cdr. Pither, the Director of Radio (Radar) services. The W/Cdr. was a tireless and pains-taking commander for promoting the relatively new radar weapon, also for the welfare of the men servicing the new equipment.

The Principal Medical Officer for NWA, W/Cdr. Davis, visited the new camp on the 28th. - he had to be satisfied that all was hygienically 100% at the new camp - then 132 tracked another enemy recce on the 29th:-

*\*A Jap recce over this morning and three Sections scrambled, but plots were bad and no interception took place. Batchelor received a visit and the enemy aircraft was seen there from the ground. Weather fine.*

The month ended with another visit from F/Lt. Wadsley, the C.O. of 44 RDF Wing, and there were 42 men and 11 vehicles on the unit.

#### May 1943.

There was another enemy raid on Darwin on the 2nd. May, and 132 located and plotted the raid:-

*\*About 0930 hours, all pilots were summoned to the aerodrome, as a big raid was impending. A formation of 21 Bettys escorted by Zekes and Haps appeared over the aerodrome, and as all ground staff hastily withdrew to cover, about 40 bombs were dropped among the buildings on the south side of the drome, and a number of others in the bush around, one of them breaking the water main and rendering our camp waterless.*

*The Squadron detailed to intercept the enemy formation did so after the bombing, and dog-fights continued for a considerable distance out to sea. We were ordered by the Wing Commander to attack the escorting fighters, and did so out of the sun, diving from 30000 feet to 15000 feet on to three V formations each of three Zekes about two miles behind the bombers. After the initial surprise which enabled the C.O. to destroy one Zeke "without the Jap knowing what had hit him," a general engagement ensued.*

Two Zekes were destroyed - one probably destroyed and two damaged. One Hap was damaged and one Betty damaged. F/O Farries was shot down and rescued unhurt from his dinghy by a Walrus after 5 1/2 hours. The action had finally to be broken off as all pilots were seriously short of petrol, and several of them failed to regain base because of this. Altogether five aircraft were lost and one seriously damaged, but only one of these losses was due to enemy action.

Group Captain R. Simms AFC, G/C. Walters and W/Cdr. Walters visited 132 on the 10th, and the next day two Controllers, S/Ldr. Strack and S/Ldr. Woodman were at the station. S/Ldr. Strack had been 132's first Controller. Enemy reccees appeared again on 23rd and 24th; both were located and tracked by 132.

\*A Dinah on recce over this morning [23.5.'43] It was intercepted but only the Dinah's tail was hit, and the enemy aircraft got away, outdistancing our aircraft whose Indicated Air Speed was 230. Return fire was experienced from the back of the glasshouse on the Dinah. (Dinahs were usually stripped of armament to increase speed. Some carried grenades for throwing.)

The C.O. of Wing, F/Lt Wadsley also visited the station on the 23rd, and on the last day of the month, F/Lt Brand who was to become 132's principal Controller, was attached to the unit.

June, 1943.

F/Lt. Wadsley was back at 132 early this month - no doubt ensuring the station was at peak efficiency at all times - then on the 17th. an enemy recce was again over Darwin...quite often this was the forerunner of a raid:

\*Scrambled 0909 hours today for a recce, which was sighted just north of Hughes airstrip proceeding in the opposite direction to our aircraft and 10000 feet above. No interception was possible.

On the 18th P/O. Campbell was posted to the station to takeover as Commanding Officer - then on the following three days - the 20th, 21st and 22nd - enemy planes were again over Darwin.

\*20th. The raid anticipated yesterday duly took place and Squadron was airborne at 0956 hours, intercepting two formations of bombers escorted by fighters, in running fights ranging from south of Melville Island, over Darwin, and out to sea again to the west. The first formation was estimated at 21 bombers and 21 fighters. Bombs were dropped at Winnellie. After this a force of 19 twin engined enemy aircraft, at present unidentified, came over RAAF Base, Darwin, dropping bombs among the buildings and strafing, making a circuit of the aerodrome. They then proceeded to Winnellie where strafing also took place.

Total score - 5 bombers and 1 fighter destroyed, 2 bombers and 1 fighter damaged.

It was the opinion of some of the English lads that this was their worst experience yet, even during their raids 'at home.'

22nd. Scrambled this morning for a somewhat mysterious accumulation of plots which showed large numbers of enemy aircraft, fighters and bombers, around the coast, over Melville Island etc. The Squadron was airborne for a considerable time, but no raid developed and no interception was made.

A Signal from the Air Officer Commanding congratulated the Squadron of the action of the 20th. There was another scramble in the afternoon for what turned out to be Beaufighters.

P/O. Campbell took over as C.O. of 132 on the 23rd, F/O. Brier then being posted to 38 at Cape Fourcroy on Bathurst Island; and after an inspection of the camp - and probably on the advice of the Mess Staff, the decision was made to alter the Mess building arrangements. On the 27th, the hard work of constructing sand-bagging at the Doover was commenced, and then on the 28th 132 again tracked enemy planes attacking Darwin:

*\*A small scale raid this morning, during which bombs were dropped near Vestley's factory N.N.W. of the town doing very little damage. The enemy force consisted 9 bombers and about the same number of fighters. 457 Sqn claimed 2 Zekes destroyed, 2 probable and 2 probable bombers. 2 Spitfires were lost, but both pilots were safe.*

Towards the end of the month, personnel were instructed in station defence, and F/Lt. Wadsley again was at the station checking the operational efficiency. Then on the 30th. enemy aircraft again raided Darwin, with 132 controlling a successful interception:

*\*A raid of 27 Bettys and at least 18 fighters - Zekes and a few Haps - was made this morning at Fenton. The enemy were intercepted in the Anson Bay area on their way in, 41 Spitfires being airborne. Attacks were made on the bombers both before and after they reached their target. 8 Bettys and 2 Zeke fighters were destroyed. We lost 4 aircraft and 1 pilot.*

#### July 1943.

F/Lt. Wadsley was again on the job on 2nd. July, and this time F/Lt. George Day accompanied him to check the station performance.

An enemy recce was over Darwin on the 4th - it was tracked by 132 - and again on the 6th. enemy planes raided Fenton, and these were also tracked by 132:

*\*A recce came over on the 4th and there were reports of enemy aircraft 30 miles out to sea but they did not come in.*

*On the 6th an enemy raid was made on Fenton, and was intercepted in much the same way as the previous raid on this target, contact being made as the raiders crossed the coast S.E. of Anson Bay. The now familiar formation of 27 Bettys and escort of Zekes, Haps and Oscars took part. We were able to muster only 7 Spitfires in the initial attack. We lost 2 aircraft, but both pilots safe.*

Over the next few days apparently F/Lt. Day was working on the gear at 132 - there was a succession of visiting officers and then on the 18th. an enemy recce was shot down, but a second recce was not intercepted:

*\*Wing was scrambled for what turned out to be two enemy recces; one over Darwin proceeding out to sea and the other coming in over Peron Island and following a north-east course. One Dinah was intercepted and was shot down by a pilot of 457 Squadron, 60 miles east of Darwin.*

*On the day following, there was a scramble for three enemy bombers, but they did not approach Darwin. Our planes got to within 50 miles of the enemy, but they turned away, and our planes were ordered to land.*

F/Lt. Wadsley was at the station yet again on the 21st, then for 4 days P/O. Campbell was in 1 MRS, while firstly F/O. Ryan acted as C.O. after which F/O. R. Hughes took over until the C.O. returned from hospital. The month ended with F/Lt. Wadsley making his 4th. visit for the month to 132.

At the end of July there were 49 men on the unit and 11 vehicles.

August 1943.

On August the 2nd, the C.O. P/O Campbell returned from hospital to take command again and F/O Hughes returned to Wing. F/Lt. Wadsley C.O. of Wing was at 132 on the 6th. and 10th. - F/Lt. Abbott the Area RDF Officer was with him on the second visit - probably keeping the station efficiency up to maximum peak was the reason for the visit.

Then on the 11th. came the first hint of things to come when a team comprising 1 Officer and 9 men arrived at the unit to carry out preliminary and structural work for the installation of new equipment.

Two recces were over Darwin the same day - and these were located and tracked by 132. The reason for the recce visit became apparent 2 days later when 18 Jap bombers raided Fenton and Coomalie after nightfall. These were also located by 132 but no contact by our fighters was made.

Four recces were over Darwin on the 17th...all were shot down and two successful interceptions were controlled from 132:

*\* 3 Dinah recces were shot down by 457 Sqn RAAF between 11.15 a.m. and noon. One of the Spitfires was covered with oil from an exploding recce. Another recce was destroyed in the afternoon.*

On the 21st. enemy bombers again raided Darwin, and these were also tracked by 132, but contact was not made.

F/O Flux arrived at the station on the 23rd. to take charge of the 3 MIS team - their specialized work of preparing for big new Canadian RWG gear would take several months.

A report on the raid of the 13th. was received on the 28th., and 132 was congratulated on its performance. P/O Henderson-Wilson arrived on the 30th. to take charge of the installation of the new gear.

September 1943.

On the 3rd. a Day of Prayer was observed and church services were held at Berrimah. and on the 4th. F/Lt. Wadsley was again at 132. Probably the installation of the RWG gear and the setting up of the new Doover was being carefully monitored.

Enemy fighter aircraft raided the Darwin area on the 7th, and the Diary records that 132 located the raiders at a range of 98 miles at 0913 hours, an extremely good range for a GCI station.

*\* We encountered the enemy unexpectedly and in the most disadvantageous position. Their formation, consisting about 20 Zekes and 1 Dinah were sighted approaching almost head-on and 2000 feet above. As we turned to attack, they also turned and came around to attack, and we were ordered to break after a few seconds. With one exception, all our people escaped but only three were able to fire at the enemy. 457 Sqn., with the advantage of height, scored 5 destroyed, 2 probables and 7 damaged. 457 now takes the lead with the highest Australian score in the Wing. One pilot is missing.*

There were two visitors on the 9th - one welcome - the other not so welcome! Wing Commander Jeffrey, DSO, DFC, visited the station and returned at night to watch a trial interception, then to enjoy a spot of refreshment in the Mess. The not-so-welcome visitor was S/Ldr. P.J.Egan and his mobile dental unit which was on the job checking the 132 choppers and choppers.

Enemy aircraft carried out a night raid on Fenton on the 15th, and on the 16th. came a welcome issue of ACF Comforts parcels.

F/Lt. Wadsley made two more visits or inspections before the month ended, and F/Lt. Clark, the Wing Medical Officer, inspected the camp on the 27th. On the same day P/O Henderson Wilson departed and F/O Bell took over the 3 MIS team, smoothing the way for the RWG gear.

October 1943.

F/Lt. Wadsley, the C.O. of 44 Radar Wing, was again at the unit on the 2nd. October, no doubt anxious to ensure that the work on the new RWG installation was proceeding as quickly and as smoothly as possible - and his visit was followed by the arrival of the Area Radar Officer, the Wing Medical Officer and also W/Cdr. Jeffrey, DSO, DFC, who also was at the unit again a few days later on the 12th.

Operationally the month proceeded without incident, but almost daily, visiting officers from Radar Wing and Area Headquarters were at 132, all of whom were obviously watching or inspecting progress on their particular responsibility in the new station and equipment.

Meanwhile the 132 watch from the old station continued as before...there were 41 men on the unit, and a new Welfare Committee was appointed.

November 1943.

A similar pattern of visiting officers continued in November - inspection - audits - checks and trials and what-have-you. It must have been something of a relief when F/Lt. Flux and an advance party of men arrived en route to their new COL station about to be set up at Cape Van Diemen on Melville Island with a second party of 60 RS men arriving on the 13th. Many men of any new station leaving Wing at Darwin to head for out-stations moved in to Knuckey's Lagoon to lodge with 132 while awaiting transport out.

Meanwhile the old station had passed plots on an enemy raid on the 12th, but no report of this raid has been recorded.

Testing and calibration of the new 132 continued, but some relief from everyday duties was provided by the issue of comforts parcels by the Australian Comforts Fund.

A Sigs Officer and a Met Officer were the next variety of officers to be at 132; then on the 24th. came the sad news of the deaths of two men who had been working at 132 with the installation teams. They had been killed at Livingstone airstrip when a Spitfire veered into them.

And so the month ended.

December 1943.

The new RWG equipment came into regular operation on the 1st., working in unison with the old and proven Mk.V gear in the Crossley trucks, the idea being to obtain a comparison of performance; and these tests were to continue for some time.

Meanwhile E/Lt. Flux and an advance party departed for Melville Island to begin the hard, preparatory work of choosing a site and then setting it up for the arrival of 60 Radar. Preliminary camp sites had to be prepared, wells dug, tracks cleared and so on.

Back at Knuckey's Lagoon, the old Mk.V equipment and the Crossley trucks were ready to depart for Adelaide River, but the immediate move was delayed so that more operating experience could be gained on the new RWG.

More officers were at the unit over the next few days...then on the 12th. F/O Campbell relinquished command of 132 and F/O Bennett took over as the new Commanding Officer.

The C.O. of Wing, F/Lt. Chilton, visited several times over the next week or so, and the previous C.O., F/O Campbell departed for Wing at Coomalie Creek on the 29th.

There were now 33 men on the unit, 14 of whom were to move with the old and proven mobile equipment, now destined to become 150 Radar at Adelaide River, after completing its distinguished period of service at Darwin.



January 1944. On the 7th., F/O J.B.Hughes arrived from Radar Wing to supervise the move of personnel back to their previous home at the RAAF Wireless station at the 11 mile...this was completed on the 8th. January and F/O Hughes returned to Wing on the 10th. The first 'get-together' at the new camp was organised for the night of the 10th. and a weighty discussion took place in the Mess, presided over by F/O.Bennett, the subject being "True Democracy is an unattainable Ideal," thankfully followed in lighter vein by a Quiz session and the election of a Welfare Committee. The customary curious visitors and critical inspections which always seemed the lot of a new camp took place over the next few weeks while the men were settling into their new home, G/Cpt. W.Farrar, the Principal Medical Officer for the Area being the most noteworthy personage probably. Also at this time there were 14 personnel from 150 Radar attached to the unit which raised the total complement to almost 50.

February proved to be similar, for a couple of evenings were organised in the Men's Mess - a discussion night and a musical evening - there was a continuing procession of visitors, especially from Wing, and as far as operations were concerned, no incidents at all were recorded, but undoubtedly the new RWG gear was being tested and monitored carefully in comparison with the well proven performance of the mobile COL Mk.V still working nearby.

So the work continued into March - the countless tasks of finishing off and camouflaging the Doover and constructing an access catwalk, in addition to fitting out the rooms with benches and cupboards, operating and testing the gear, and what-have-you.

The most distinguished visitors in March were G/Cpt. Chamberlain and W/Cdr. Jeffrey DSO, DFC, the Commanding Officer of No. 1 Fighter Wing. Towards the end of the month Calibration flights for the new RWG gear were completed - F/O Gathercole arrived to take over the Administration duties of the station for a while, and finally on the 31st. March, the new 132 station with RWG gear was declared operational.

April. Yet again in this month, a steady stream of visitors came to inspect, check or just to view the station. There were further calibration flights, and the Zone Education Officer felt it necessary to deliver a lecture on "Demobilization," - a sure sign of the positive progress of the war. The calibration flights were declared finished on the 16th., and over this period, F/O Hughes, C.O. of 150 RS. made several visits, finally leaving with his men and with the Crossley mobile gear to head for Adelaide River to set up his station. On the 21st., F/O Gathercole who had been attending to the Administration duties of 132 also departed, leaving the new 132 C.O. to attend to all station duties, and with a total of 31 men on the unit.

May continued in similar fashion - radar officers and various other officers of varying importance - even the Area Law Officer visited the new station, no doubt all hoping to see the impressive new equipment in operation. Towards the end of the month an enemy recce came in over Darwin and was tracked by 132, but no interception took place - probably its appearance was an indication that the 'Wet' season was now over. And F/Lt. Williams, C.O. of 154, the new mobile GCI station on its way out to Truscott, came with his unit to 'lodge' at 132 pending his unit's departure from Darwin by Liberty ship.

There was a little more activity around 132 in June - an enemy recce was over Darwin on the 2nd. - an interception was attempted but this was not successful. Lieut. Lochie from the A.A.Group H/Q. delivered a lecture on 'A.A. Defences in the Darwin Area' - and F/O.Frahn spoke on 'Meteorology and Radar.'

On the 7th., Lieut. Boxall from Coonawarra Navy Signals visited to investigate interference from the Naval W/T., and on the next day 4 RAAF Officers, including F/O Sanderson of the well known Mobile Installation Section visited the station. F/O Sanderson was responsible for setting up or rebuilding several outlying stations around Darwin.

There was some jubilation on the 11th. when an enemy recce, tracked by 132, ventured down towards Fenton Air Base where it was intercepted and shot down. The old mobile gear now at 150 Adelaide River controlled the interception.

The camouflaging of the station was checked over by Camoufleur Mr. Cork on the 13th., and on the 20th. F/Lt. Williams and 154 Radar departed to embark for Truscott where that station was largely responsible for the interception and destruction of the last enemy plane to be shot down over Australia.

July proved rather noteworthy. Apparently the local war situation was considered sufficiently under control for the 132 men to join in the various local sports competitions. There was a cricket match scheduled against 8T&MO on the 2nd. 132 won...but only on a forfeit...a hollow victory!

On the 9th. 132 was defeated at cricket by 7 RSU 'B' team, and on the 6th, 132 was defeated by 7 RSY 'A' team. A further defeat was suffered on the 23rd. at the hands of 28 ASP, then on the 26th., 132 was defeated at tennis by 59 RS. At least 132 was consistent....in defeat! But the highlight of the month was the visit by Air Marshal A.T.Cole, CBE, DSO, MC, DFC, Air Officer Commanding North Western Area.

On the 27th., 132 assumed stand-by status, and in future was to operate at call as a GCI station only.

August. Enemy flights over Darwin were now almost a thing of the past, and Diary entries for August list mainly visitors to the unit - even sporting events, victorious or otherwise, are not recorded. The visitors included S/Ldr. Grout-Smith, Area Radar Officer, and other Officers from No. 1 Fighter Wing - NWA H/Q - and S/Ldr. Chilton, CO of Radar Wing. Also F/Lt. J.B. Hughes, previously CO of 150 RS was a visitor; and on 14th. August he assumed command of 132, taking over from F/O Bennett.

On the 15th., F/Lt. Leonard and F/O Bellamy, pilots of 54 Sqn., visited the Ops. room to gain a better understanding of the close co-operation required between the GCI and the Fighter Squadron; and on the 21st. and 22nd. S/Ldr. Chilton again visited - also the Radar Medical Officer. Then as from the 22nd., 132 RS was attached to 105 FCU when 44 Radar Wing ceased to exist.

On the 25th. F/Lt. Hughes relinquished command of 132, and F/O Craigen RAF took over, while on the same day S/Ldr. Brand, a previous Controller at 132 visited his old station in its new form, with gear and conditions so very different from the days of action when he was attached to the station. Finally, on the 26th., G/Cpt. Jeffrey, CO of No. 1 Fighter Wing, came with a party to view the new station.

DIARY COMMENT: "The morale of the personnel is high. Some good work has been done by the Controller, F/O J.F. Dohrmann and the crew during practice interceptions held this month.

Completion of the work on the dehumidising equipment in the Operations Room is awaited . "

In September, the 132 station Diary becomes something of a visitors' book but nevertheless there was a continuing programme of practice interceptions to maintain station efficiency.

On the 4th., the station DWO, W/O Leatherbarrow departed on posting to 105 FCU - and on the 9th., S/Ldr. Grout-Smith visited to compare the performance of 132 with that of 162 which was then operating nearby.

Two Sergeants, Aerodrome Defence Instructors, arrived on the 13th. on temporary attachment, and besides bringing the Security Guards up to scratch, they also instructed other unit personnel in this 'brush up' course. Their stay continued over three days.

The most noteworthy visitors for the month were Air Commodore McAulley, Deputy CAS; Wing Cdr. Ryan, CO RAAF Darwin, and Group Capt. Jeffrey, CO No. 1 Fighter Wing who came to view the gear; and then on the 23rd. one of the regular Controllers, F/O. Dohrmann departed to be attached to 150 RS at Adelaide River, his duties at 132 being taken over by F/Lt. Mailey. A friendly gesture on the 27th. was a visit by S/Ldr. Chilton, previously CO of Radar Wing and a regular visitor to 132. S/Ldr. Chiltern came to say 'Farewell' prior to his departure for the South.

October commenced with Controller F/O. Cumes taking over from F/Lt. Mailey; and two 110 FCU Controllers, F/Lt. Vanderfield and F/O. Riley each controlled a practice interception on the RWG, both of which were successful.

On the 5th., a 16 mm. educational film 'News Preview No. 1' was shown in the Airmens' Mess and all personnel off duty attended.

The senior mechanic, Sgt. MacGowan was posted south on the 7th. and his duties were taken over by Sgt. Murchison - then on the 10th. Sgt. Russell Balmer, Radar Operator, arrived on posting. Two visiting scientists from the CSIR watched operations on the 14th. and on the 17th. the CO of 54 Sqn., S/Ldr. Lennard and P/O. Heffernan visited the Operations Room to observe how interceptions were controlled.

There was another 132 move coming up - and on the 18th. S/Ldr. Reynolds of 5 RIMU visited the camp to enquire when personnel would move to 105 FCU. The CO was then advised that the unit would move to 105 on the 20th. - in effect with 1 day's notice.

And so all domestic, clerical and personal effects were moved, and a 132 Orderly Room tent was set up next to the 105 Orderly Room. Only four days later it was agreed that the tent was unsatisfactory and leaked - and so it was necessary to seek a more permanent location.

Back at the Doover, G/Cpt. Jeffrey and G/Cpt. Walker, accompanied by W/Cdr. Cox, CO of 105 FCU and F/Lt. Hughes the 105 Radar Officer visited to familiarise themselves with the procedures and requirements of the station.

DIARY COMMENT. With the move of the Unit's domestic site to 105 FCU, the Cooks and the Cooks' Assistant, together with the DMT have been posted to 105 FCU and are available to other stations. Apart from this saving in manpower, the transport sections have been virtually amalgamated to the benefit of both 105 FCU and this Unit.

November. Practice interceptions were the order of the day in November with a series of successful operations being carried out during the month by the two regular Controllers, F/O. Cumes and F/Lt. Dohrmann, while F/O. Waldron and F/O. Dale were two 'new' Controllers anxious to prove their skills - so too the Operators who were always on their mettle during these operations. The Radar Medical Officer, F/Lt. Hare, visited the Ops room on the 3rd., and he remarked on the lack of ventilation.

On the 17th. the 132 Orderly Room, now at 105 FCU, was able to move from the unsatisfactory tent quarters into the 105 Orderly Room - and on the 19th. the well known Padre F/Lt. Beckett visited the unit.

Two officers, S/Ldr. Reynolds, CO 5 RIMU and F/Lt. Mickelburg visited the Technical site on the 23rd, and on the 26th. there were more visitors of import - G/Cpt. Armstrong and G/Cpt. Dibbs, also W/Cdr. Cox, the CO of 105 and five civilian members of the Aeronautical Advisory Committee who were shown the equipment in operation.

Early in the month, F/Lt. Dohrmann had returned to 132 to act as instructor

to newly appointed Controllers.

At the end of the month, the station complement was 1 Officer and 14 airmen.

December proved to be one of those busy months during which nothing much happened! Again there were many visitors - from the Air Force, Army and Navy - including F/O Pettett, a Controller from 110 Mobile FCU which was soon to move on to Morotai and Balikpapan, Borneo. Another visitor was Lt. MacGillicuddy, CO of the Army Searchlight Co-op and Lt. Blanch, an Army Liaison Officer. As 132 was linked during night-time practice interceptions with the Army searchlight unit nearby and passed on grid references on plots, possibly this was the reason for the visit.

F/Lt. Kidd, the Radar Medical Officer also visited, and he made further criticism of the conditions in the Ops room - the de-humidiser still was not working.

There were several postings of personnel to and from the unit and also F/Lt. A. Ryan arrived to take over as Commanding Officer from F/O Craigen - and Sergeant Operator Russell Balmer was also posted away.

The intensive programme of practice interceptions continued during the month, and 132 was certainly kept at the ready for any emergency. And while no mention of Christmas occurs in the Diary, celebrations were well to the fore - particularly back at 105 FCU where 132 lodged and these have been described separately,

#### January 1945.

January commenced with the regular maintenance of the equipment - also a Matching and Phasing party was in attendance at the same time, and the NWA Camouflage Officer also called to inspect the site.

On the 16th., an unidentified aircraft (no IFF probably) was tracked and intercepted, and this was reported to be friendly.

With authority and permission from 105 FCU, an Officer and 14 men from the Army Searchlight Unit visited the Technical Site on the 18th., and on the 21st the name of the parent unit, 105 FCU, was officially changed, and now became Air Defence Headquarters (ADHQ).

On the 27th., the 132 Orderly Room was transferred into a new building at ADHQ.

February proved an uneventful month - there were no practice interceptions, and operations were confined principally to a lecture and demonstration of radar jamming techniques. This was the month when a Hudson aircraft scattered 'window' - the strips of foil used to jam radar - along a stretch of the West Australian coast so causing a scare in Perth that an Air Raid could be on the way. Lt. Grey of the USN outlined the various methods. A further demonstration was witnessed on the 12th.

Cpl. Kloeden took over the Orderly Room duties, and LAC Jack was promoted to the rank of Acting Corporal.

The onset of the Wet season resulted in the lagoon waters rising around the Doover, and the catwalk approach was brought into use, and repairs and maintenance to the Doover camouflage were effected. Operators while off duty commenced laying pipes to bring water from the old searchlight camp to help control the humidity in the Ops room.

March. 132 was called on air at the beginning of the month to search for 'bandit' plots but with no result. A Controller and full crew remained on standby during the day at the Ops room which would indicate that a 'recce' was suspected. On the 12th. a searchlight co-operation flight brought the station on air again - these were flights when 132 and the nearby searchlight unit were linked by phone so that plots were instantly passed to the searchlight crews. Then on the 13th there was a more unusual exercise - a swimming parade at the Doover! Was the water deep enough around the

building - or was the parade at a deeper lagoon? Either way, it was decided that all personnel could swim - and there were no more swimming parades! By the 17th. the de-humidising plant in the Ops room was at last operating O.K. - after long months of procrastination and no action - and on the 19th. F/Lt. A.G.Price took over as CO of 132. Evidently the new CO felt that efficiency might have dropped away, for a solid series of practice interceptions took place during the remainder of the month which had a somewhat varied success rate. The R/T failed - so too the phone communication at times which brought about an overhaul of the communications systems. At the same time, crews were on a 24 hour stand-by at the Doover during the full moon period.

G/Cpt. 'Black-jack' Walker, CO of ADHQ, and W/Cdr. Cox visited on the 26th. to witness the practice interceptions - and again the R/T failed! And on the 27th. during an interception practice, the target Spitfire flew south and into the range of 150 RS at Adelaide River, and so control was handed over to that station.

The month ended with a searchlight co-op flight on the 28th. The station complement remained at 13 with an additional 5 guards attached. These men were living in their camp in the bush near the catwalk approach.

April. The station efficiency was tested to the full this month with a continuing series of practice interceptions employing Liberators and Spitfires - and there were searchlight co-op flights and height tests - even a test period when ASV interference was checked. Perhaps the visit of 'Black-jack' Walker brought about the activities this month, all of which appear related to keeping the station at a state of readiness for any alert. A full crew again was at the ready during the full moon period.

May commenced with a continuation of the intense programme of practising interceptions during both night and day, and again the routine 3 monthly maintenance work was carried out.

The CO, F/Lt. A.Price handed over command to F/Lt. R. Benham - and a similar pattern of operations continued with practices and with a full crew at the Doover on 24 hour watch during the full moon period.

F/O's Beeston and Eddy arrived on posting as the Controllers, and to accustom them to the equipment and the crews, the practices continued. Because interference appeared to be emanating from the nearby Army searchlight unit, arrangements were made for the set to be moved some 2 miles away from 132 after which the interference was considered negligible.

June. The intense programme of practising was continued this month with a high success rate. One interception was of more than usual interest as 3 Liberators returning from a mission became the target. At the end of the month, the station was actually 'off air' because no replacement was available for a faulty transformer in the receiver - a substitute was used but it proved unsatisfactory - suitable for emergency operation only.

July. A practice interception at the beginning of the month was successful, but the echo amplifier 'G for George' proved weak which made identification of the attack aircraft difficult.

Further interceptions continued during the month - all successful - a good indicator of the station's efficiency.

On the 20th., a special test was carried out with a Meteorological balloon and dipoles cut in length to accord with the wavelength of the equipment, the purpose being to ascertain if the balloon and its reflector dipoles could be tracked as it ascended...the results were not noted.

One Caterpillar diesel of the three that supplied power for the station became U/S on the 22nd., - and it was found that no spares were available

in Darwin to effect repairs.

The station complement remained at 13 plus 5 Guards.

132 was called on air again on August 2nd. to locate an aircraft showing 'distress' signals....the aircraft was located and tracked until it was safely over Darwin.

Two Army Officers from Darwin Fixed Defences inspected the Operations room on the 3rd., and on the 8th. several of the men were able to attend a Dance at ADHQ (a separate account of this occasion has been written.)

On August 15th. came the news of the surrender of Japan - VJ Day - the announcement came at 8.30 in the morning. The station closed down for two days and one Guard only was left to watch over the Technical site. The station was restored to standby status on the 17th.

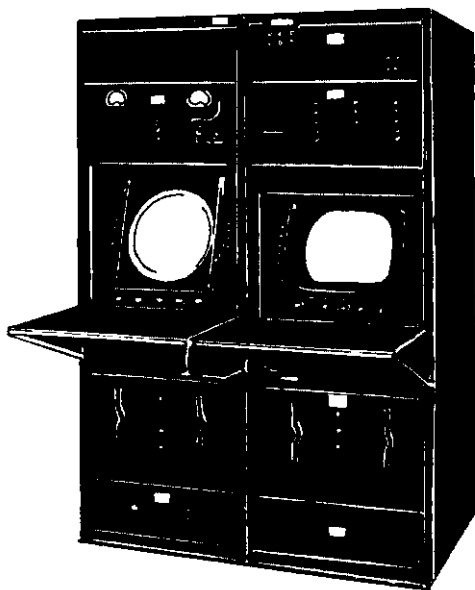
September - the last month of Diary entries.

The Caterpillar engine No. 3 is still U/S due to non-availability of any pistons....then on the 18th. the station was called on air to track a Liberator showing the distress code. The aircraft was tracked over the last 50 miles into Darwin.

And on the 24th. Stan Crichton's determined efforts to build a cooling tower for the cooling unit were recognized when the unit finally began working.

On September 30th. 5 P.O.W's visited the Doover in the company of Officers and carers. They were shown the equipment while working, and they and their party were looked after as well as our resources allowed.

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### 132 RADAR PERSONNEL.

		Commanding Officer.
20/3/43	F/1 J.K.Brier.	"
18/6/43	F/O A.A.Campbell.	"
4/12/43	F/O J.M.Bennett.	" <u>Admin Duties.</u>
14/8/44	F/Lt. J.B.Hughes.	" <u>1 month.</u>
9/44	F/O J.C.Craigen RAF.	"
21/12/44	F/Lt. A.J.Ryan.	" F/O R.H.Gathercole.
18/3/45	F/Lt. A.G.Price.	"
17/5/45	F/Lt. R.W.Benham.	"

#### Controllers.

S/Ldr.	Strack.	F/O W.W.Waldron.
F/O	R.M.Brand.	F/O Pettet.
F/Lt.	J.F.Dohrmann.	F/O J.G.Connor.
F/O	W.Mailey DFC.	F/O H.H.Milvain.
F/O	Cumes.	F/O J.Smith.
F/Lt.	Vanderfeld 110 FCU.	F/O Gaskell.
F/O	Riley.	F/O Hogben.
F/O	Turner.	F/O Beeston.
F/Lt.	H.M.De Crespigny.	F/O Eddy.

#### Radar Mechanics.

McPherson	K.A.
Murchison	K.L.
Hill	R.D.
Duff	T.S.
Hards	E.B.L.F/Sgt.
Gadd	M.T.
Panelli	I.A.

#### Radar Operators.

Samblebe	H.C.
Joscelyne	J.M.
Paschke	L.J.
Patterson	E.W.
Henderson	I.D.
Beesley	R.M.
Bignell	H.J.
Bentley	K.E.
Stewart	A.C.
McGarvie	J.G.
Jacobs	A.C.
Matters	C.L.
Armstrong	W.S.
McDonnell	R.T.
James	D.W.
McDonald	C.H.
Unstead	N.A.L.
Peach	W.R.
McKinlay	A.J.
Gair	J.H.R.
Doyle	R.J.

#### Radar Operators (Cont.)

Holder	K.B.
Pascoe	E.J.
Langcake	W.C.
Callahan	J.E.
Sands	J.E.L.
Young	R.M.
Cruikshank	G.R.
Cottrell	M.J.
Dyke	C.R.
Goodman	W.H.
Swanson	J.D.
Carmichael	W.H.
Brothers	G.D.
Bryan	J.R.
Duthie	L.G.

Note that many of the early men  
in radar mustering became NCO's.





# 150 RADAR

## ADELAIDE RIVER

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### SIGNIFICANT EVENTS.

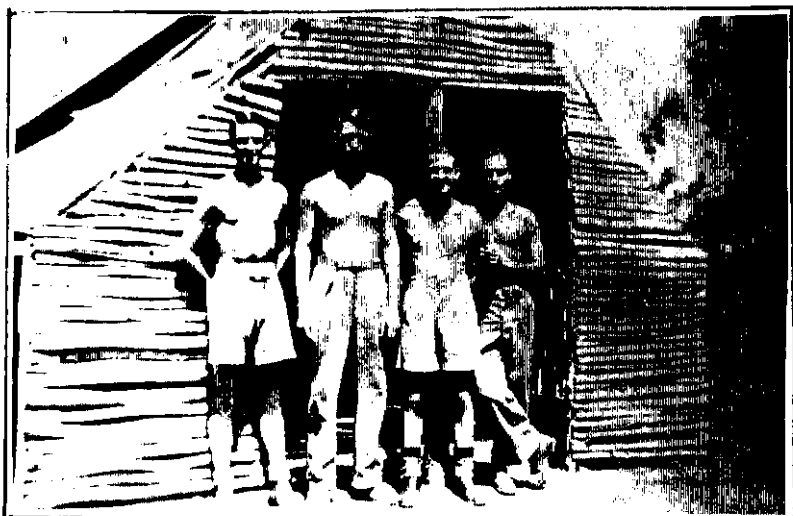
- 17 Apl 43 Unit Formed at Laverton, Victoria.
- 17 Jun 43 150 Personnel leave for N.I.
- 27 Jun 43 Unit arrives in Darwin N.T.
- 11 Aug 43 Advance Party moves to Adelaide River.
- 17 Apl 44 Mobile Units handed over from 132 Radar.
- 27 Apl 44 Operational at Adelaide River, - testing.
- 01 May 44 Unit Operational.
- 11 Jun 44 Successful intercept of enemy aircraft.
- 03 Mar 45 Hostile tracked - last hostile over Darwin.
- 02 Jul 45 Unit ceases operations - to C. and M.
- 13 Jul 45 Unit moves to ADHQ Berrimah.
- 18 Apl 46 Unit disbanded.

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This section covers the final operational period of the 132 Radar Crossleys, generators and aerial, which became 150 Radar in April 1944.

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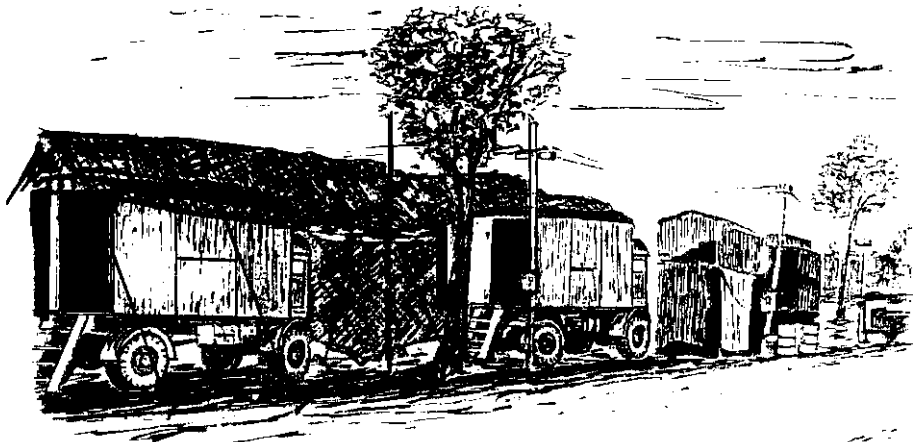
ON DUTY AT 150 RADAR, ADELAIDE RIVER.



(Left to Right.) Bryan Wardle, Fred Moore, Fred Box and Paul Hicks.



(L. to R.) Ian Grayling, Jim Setches, --- Don Taggart,  
F/O Orriss, F/O Waldron.  
'Joe from Nambour,' Keith Backshall, Bryan Wardle,  
Percy Lee Koo, Allan Dennison.



### THE STORY OF 150 RADAR FROM THE A50 DIARY.

150 Radar began to form up at Laverton, near Melbourne, in April 1943. The story of its formation is very unclear because few Diary notes were made, but it was the only GCI station to form up in Victoria - it 'formed' and then continued for 12 months without vehicles or equipment - and unfortunately there are no C.O.'s reports or POR's to tell its story, only its rather uninformative A50 Diary notes. These tell that P/O J.B.Hughes was appointed as the first C.O. and that he immediately began to requisition for the necessary equipment and controlled items. At the end of April there were 25 men on the unit, but no radar gear or vehicles.

The unit continued to build up during May as a 'Lodger' unit at Laverton, and at the end of the month, 65 men and 1 general service tender were 'on strength' at 150 - the large number of men suggesting the unit was at more than full strength to aid its next movement.

In June came the 'big move' from Laverton to Darwin which stretched over a time period of ten days, which certainly points to the long haul by rail and road convoy via Adelaide and Terowie.

150 RS arrived at 44 RDF Wing on 27th. June 1943 where the unit 'lodged' while awaiting the preparation and completion of the camp site at Adelaide River which was to be its operational site. The complement of 150 RS was now 51.

On August 11th, after advice was received that the principal camp buildings were completed, 4 men were selected as an Advance Party, and they left for the new camp at Adelaide River with portion of the non-technical equipment; meanwhile F/O J.B.Hughes - now enjoying promotion - proceeded to 109 RS at Adelaide River on temporary duty, with the remainder of the men still 'lodging' at RDF Wing.

September saw the same arrangement - but there were some stirrings in October when various officers from Wing including the Commanding Officer inspected arrangements at the new camp site on 4 different occasions. Meanwhile, the advance party continued with the preparatory work, while the remainder of the men still lodged at Wing no doubt kept busy with fatigues and Physical Training. During this time the 150 C.O., F/O Hughes moved to 59 RS 'on duty.'

Early in November, a Mobile Works Squadron party completed the construction of a road from the camp entrance to the technical site - then on the 12th. came the first enemy night raid with bombs dropped close to the new camp.

The Diary now reveals that the Mobile gear of 132 Radar at Knuckey's Lagoon - Mk V equipment in big Crossley vans - was intended to become the Technical gear for 150 Radar at Adelaide River once the big new RWG equipment at 132 was operating satisfactorily. 150 Radar now had 24 men on strength. (Editor.... The question will forever remain unresolved...why didn't 132 Radar with its mobile vans retain its proven gear and identity and move down the bitumen to Adelaide River, leaving 150 Radar to set up at Knuckey's with the new Doover, the new RWG gear, and the newly installed Caterpillar diesels..)

December 1943 continued in uneventful fashion for 150 RS - the C.O. returned to his unit from 59 RS - while the Advance Party and the principal group of men at Wing pushed on with their preparatory work.

January 1944 saw a shuffling of officers in the C.O.'s position. F/O Hughes, who had been with 150 from its first day at Laverton, was detailed to command 309 RS with effect from the 12th. January, while F/O E.J.Bass became C.O. 150 from the same date. The previous C.O. departed for 309 RS on 17th. January, but F/O Bass had not arrived at the end of the month.

On the 13th. February, the Advance Party rejoined the main 150 RS unit still at Wing as the Adelaide River site was now temporarily occupied by 161 Radar - an LW/GCI unit which had arrived from Richmond N.S.W. During the next month the men from 150 lodged at Wing and at 132 RS where their future mobile equipment was still operating. 150 RS was still without a C.O. during this month, and the A50 report was signed by F/Lt. Clem Morath, the extremely well known and somewhat notorious S.A.O. of Wing who was just a little fanatical about physical fitness for the troops.

March continued in very similar fashion, except that F/O Hughes was again appointed to command 150 RS, effective from 17th. March. And there were still 24 men on strength.

April 1944 - twelve months since 150 first formed at Laverton - but this month proved to be the Big One! Firstly F/O Hughes returned to his unit.... then on the 17th. April the Mobile Equipment from 132 was handed over, then to be taken to 44 Wing for checking and overhaul, in the charge of 11 men who had been making themselves familiar with the equipment. By the 26th. April, the equipment had been overhauled, and the vehicles and men moved the 50 odd miles down to the new site at Adelaide River where apparently its neighbours were an Army butchery and an Army laundry. On 29th. April, Controllers S/Ldr. Brand and F/Lt. Ash arrived from 105 FCU to take up the Controllers' duties at 150, and F/O Davies carried out calibration tests and flights which all proved satisfactory. S/Ldr. Chilton, the C.O. of Wing, accompanied by the Wing Medical Officer, carried out an inspection of the new camp and its equipment on the 30th. All appeared satisfactory and fully staffed with 3 officers and 43 men now on strength.

May 1st., 1944. 150 RS became operational at 0600 hours - and then followed a month of intensive practice and 'working up.' There were searchlight co-ops early in the month, and Lieut. Shipway, a searchlight officer, visited the station to gain some idea of how the system worked. Practice interceptions took place on the 7th, 9th, and 11th., with accuracy and skill quickly improving. On the 13th. May, S/Ldr. Brand was recalled to 105 FCU - perhaps it was no co-incidence because a 'hostile' was located over Darwin. 150 Radar was able to send in 6 plots at a range of approximately 60 miles. There were more practice interceptions on the 16th, 18th, 22nd, 25th, and 28th

and the station now operated on 'stand-by' with the authority of Wing and NWA H/Q. S/Ldr. Brand apparently completed his attachment on the 26th., and left the station to return to 105 FCU on the 28th.

Padres Brown and Deakin conducted church services on the station during the month - and May concluded with every indication that 150 RS was now well settled and operating with considerable efficiency and skill which was maintained with frequent practice interceptions and searchlight co-op exercises.

On 2nd. June an enemy recce aircraft was located at a range of 64 miles - probably over the Darwin area - and the plane was tracked for 90 miles. 14 plots were passed to 105 FCU before the target was lost at a range of 92 miles.

Then on the 8th., a Beaufort bomber and a Spitfire interceptor co-operated in a searchlight co-op exercise.

On the 11th., (correct date 12th.) at 0736 hours, a hostile recce was located at 31 miles and 150 RS was responsible for the interception:

*An early morning enemy reconnaissance mission was mounted from its Lautem base. Radar plotted the 'Dinah' and 452 Squadron was scrambled. The plane was intercepted at 8560 metres and it was downed in the sea west of Pt. Blaze. The engine of one of our planes failed shortly afterwards and was ditched. The pilot was rescued by Catalina north of Peron Island. (Darwin's Air War.)*

*On the 12th. a recce was observed when in a running interception with 'friendly' fighter planes, and was seen to crash into the sea approximately 16 miles north of the station. (307/61 Radar, Peron Island.)*

A mobile dental unit arrived at 150 on the 14th - and examinations and treatments commenced - these dental visits usually continued over 3 or 4 days.

Practice interceptions continued again on the 16th. and 18th. and again on the 22nd. - all were 'fally-ho' jobs; and also successful was a searchlight co-op exercise on the 19th. The operators and Controller appear to have melded into a very efficient and successful team.

On the 27th. a bevy of somewhat more senior officers visited. There was W/Cdr. Cox, the C.O. of 105 FCU, and 2 S/Ldrs:- also Lt. Col. Baglin, AADC, and Major Green, the C.O. of the Batchelor searchlights.

The successful interception of the enemy recce on the 12th. proved to be the last successful interception over the actual Darwin area itself, (though during the month following another Dinah was intercepted and shot down over the Truscott area.)

At the end of June there were 2 officers and 25 O/R's on strength at 150.

The four months from July to October saw an intense period of practice at 150 - there were at least 37 practice interceptions and searchlight co-operation exercises with probably double runs on some of these as well.

150 Radar was certainly not going to be caught unprepared! The exercises involved a variety of aircraft at varying altitudes and speeds, and with varying numbers of aircraft at different times in both night and day.

A Mitchell and a Beaufighter were involved in one exercise - then 4 Spitfires in several at heights of 20000 feet or more. And so the skills and efficiency were kept up to date as the months passed.

On the 5th. July the C.O. of 44 Wing visited - and on the 16th. the C.O. received advice of his promotion to Acting F/Lt.

F/D Turner, the Controller of 110 MFCU arrived for controlling experience on the 25th., and on the 29th. F/Lt. McDougall arrived to take command

of 150, after which F/Lt. Hughes departed to become Radar Officer at 105 FCU.

On the 2nd. August, Group Captain P. Jeffrey, the C.O. of 1 Fighter Wing, and S/Ldr. A.R.Gorrie arrived to inspect the radar, and then on the 12th. August F/Lt. W.A.Mailey took over the Controller's duties from F/Lt. P.Ash. 44 Radar Wing ceased to be on 22nd. August 1944, and from that date 150 Radar and all other stations were attached to 105 FCU which effectively became the radar H.Q. Nevertheless, on the same day the well known Controller S/Ldr. Brand visited the station. The month ended with a night interception and searchlight exercise involving a Beaufort bomber and a Spitfire making 3 runs across the area.

There were a few visitors to 150 station during September - the first two were F/Lt. J.Gordon the Area Cypher Officer, and F/Lt. C.E.Knife the Area Security Officer, and they arrived on the 13th. Then on the 23rd., F/Lt. Hughes, now the Area Radar Officer, visited his old station on inspection. On the same day, F/O Dohrman arrived to replace F/Lt. Mailey as the 150 Controller. S/Ldr. Grout Smith and S/Ldr. Purdee were on the station the next day to inspect the Signals and Radar gear. The month ended with test flights at 18000 feet and 10000 feet. 2 Officers and 30 O/R's made the complement of 150 Radar at this stage.

October 1944 seems to have been a 'practice' month, with a Mitchell and several Spitfires participating. No station activities seemed worth recording which has proved a pity for later historians!

But November proved far more informative. On the first day a group of officers headed by W/Cdr. Phillips inspected the technical gear, and on the 3rd. 162 Radar - an LW/GCI - became a 'lodger' unit; and also F/O Dohrman was promoted to the rank of F/Lt. He in turn was recalled on posting to 105 FCU while F/O. Cumes took over as the 150 Controller.

162 Radar departed on the 13th., with Morotai as its destination - and on the 19th. F/Lt. Kidd, the Radar Medico arrived to inspect the unit and to examine several patients.

F/O. W.W.Waldron arrived on Controlling duties on the 22nd, his appointment following Administration Instruction and controlling practice at both 131 Radar at Ash Island and 132 Radar at Knuckey's Lagoon - and the month ended with 2 practice interceptions, each involving 4 Spitfires.

On the 7th. December, F/O. Cumes controlled a practice interception at 21000 feet, and in the recreation side of things, the 150 RS Table Tennis Tournament ended on the 8th.

F/O. Cumes departed on posting to 105 FCU on the 14th., and on the same day - and possibly for the first time - pictures were shown on the station.

F/O. Waldron, the Controller, also assumed command of the station on the 15th., and two days later F/Lt. McDougall returned to 105 FCU.

There was another film show on the 21st., and on the 23rd. and the 24th., Padre Clayton held a service, with a Communion Service on the following morning, these apparently were in the preparations for Christmas.

On Christmas Day itself there would have been a special meal undoubtedly with the men being waited on by the officers and sergeants, and a party was held in the Mess with a Quiz, community singing and various games.

The 27th. proved a good day for the troops when an ACF Mobile Canteen visited the unit, distributing cordial and other treats - and a euchre tournament was organised for that night.

The month ended with another practice interception, an exercise much appreciated after such a long spell. F/O. Waldron controlled the interception.

1945. The New Year began in very unexciting fashion - the Radar Medical Officer, F/Lt. Kidd visited the unit, probably to check on matters of hygiene - there were some educational films on the 11th., and the well known Padre Beckett was also on the station to conduct a service. Things became a bit brighter on the 12th. when a YMCA Rep. distributed comforts - an occasion which proved doubly popular when it was repeated on the 15th., with a euchre tournament arranged for the evening.

150 RS was called 'on air' on the 16th. plotting an unidentified aircraft which was later identified as 'friendly.' IFF had been forgotten probably. Then followed a few visitors of varying importance, and a cricket match against the 3rd. Aust. Field Butchery. This was on the 20th., with the 150 team being very effectively put down. S/Ldr. Ash and F/Lt. Delahunty of ADHQ (as 105 FCU was now known) visited 150 on the 21st., and C.O. F/O Waldron departed to spend a few days at ADHQ.

On the 22nd. the first of a series of fortnightly film shows was arranged, and F/O Waldron returned. Three days later - on the 25th.- Area Welfare delivered a steel locker of books - a welcome new library.

150 RS was again called 'on air' to plot an unidentified aircraft - no IFF again - for the aircraft again proved friendly. F/O Waldron visited 4 RSU to be tested as a Specially Approved Driver - and a Salvo Officer distributed comforts to the troops. 150 was proving to be a popular calling place. The month ended with another euchre tournament.

February began with a visit by Padre Clayton who also made arrangements for future church services. That evening he attended a cards and quiz entertainment in the Mess, and the following morning he was on the job with a Communion service. F/Lt. Kidd arrived later in the day, meeting up with the Principal Medical Officer of NWA. W/Cdr. Knight also called at 150 so obviously there was some concern about camp hygiene. On the 5th. February, the C.O. accompanied Major Watson on an inspection of the rear approach to the station, and resulting from this, approval was given for the erection of a barricade with a 'Prohibited Area' sign. It was hoped that this precaution would prevent the entry of unauthorised vehicles to the 150 RS restricted area.

F/O Waldron relinquished command on the 9th with P/O Orris becoming Temporary C.O., with F/O Dale acting as the 150 Controller. Radar jamming and demonstrations and tests of interference techniques were carried out. An unidentified aircraft was apparently approaching the area on the 13th, and 150 was called on air to search for it, but it landed outside their search area....evidently another 'friendly' A similar incident occurred on the 16th. On the 17th F/O Dale left the station, leaving F/Lt. Mailey as Controller....and 10 men from 150 were selected to play in a football team against the AWC.

F/Lt. Mailey became the C.O. on the 19th, and the duty crew was called on to search for a 'friendly' flying north, but again it landed outside the search area. On the 27th, a B24 showing a Distress signal was approaching the area, and 150 was able to help by passing four plots...then advice was received that it had been vectored to a safe landing at Fenton. On the 2nd. March, the rather relaxed atmosphere at 150 was quickly changed when the station was called on to track an aircraft. Three good plots

were passed to ADHQ, and the aircraft was identified as 'Hostile.'  
F/Lt. Willis from 5 DWD called also to examine and report on the possibility of installing a water pump and engine, and a RAAF Welfare Mobile Unit pulled into the station to entertain with a varied programme of music.

F/Lt. Kidd the Radar Medic, was on the job again on the 6th. inspecting and checking the unit's medical stores - and on the 13th. F/Lt. Ikin conducted a Pay Parade, at the same time calling for Bond Applications in the 3rd. Victory Loan.

There was a discussion with S/Ldr. Meckleburg on the 16th. concerning the difficulties experienced in obtaining parts and arranging for technical repairs, and over the next few days 150 was kept on alert searching for and following the tracks of various aircraft, with a 2 hour height test on the 23rd. One diesel engine was taken to 5 RIMU on the 27th., and S/Ldr. O'Hara called to discuss the hostile plots on the 2nd, and he invited criticisms and suggestions for better operations and procedures. A replacement diesel engine was picked up on the 29th., and P/O Smith from Area Hygiene called to discuss arrangements for the Area Hygiene Squad to erect new latrines and to instal a new water pipeline - also the laying of a concrete floor in the Men's Mess.

There were 2 Officers and 24 men on 150 at this time.

April 1945. ADHQ was obviously a mite 'edgy' over this period, and on the 2nd. April 150 RS was searching for an unidentified aircraft (and subsequently found to be a Spitfire) - and again on the 11th., an unidentified plane eventually turned out to be a staid old C47.

On the 13th. F/O Orris was admitted to hospital with infected ears, and Padre Clayton was on the station again to hold a church service with a communion service the following morning.

There was yet another radar search on the 16th., and again on the 20th. when the plane, a B24 Liberator, actually passed right over the station. Meanwhile there was an inspection of the technical gear and the diesels..... ADHQ was ensuring that 150 RS was kept 'on the ball.'

On the 20th. W/O Longmire arrived to take up duties as Technical Officer in place of F/O Orris, and F/O Hoqben arrived on the 26th. to take over as the 150 Controller.

Some seriously hard work was taken up on the 27th. At 9 a.m. work commenced on 12 yards of 3 inch concrete for a practice cricket pitch, and the carefully smoothed piece of work was finished in just over three hours. Padre Alexander who was new to the job, visited 150 for the first time, and he afterwards showed some interesting strip films.

S/Ldr. O'Hara arrived on the 30th. to watch the operators in action, and the crew on duty earned some favourable comments from him. This action at the Dover was followed by some action of a less technical nature when the Hygiene Squad from NWA commenced work, their schedule including new camp latrines and a new pipeline and a new floor in the Mess.

May began with a couple of practice interceptions - the first runs were successful with 'Jolly-Hos' from the pilots, but the second runs were unsuccessful for some unknown reason.

On the 6th., a party of Officers led by S/Ldr. O'Hara inspected the technical gear, and F/Lt. Hadgraft, an Education Officer, was on the station on the 12th. - guidance for the post war years was the subject no doubt, for VE Day this month would be a sure indicator of coming peace.

F/Lt. Mailey left the unit on posting on the 15th., and the new latrines



were completed, commissioned and probably tested.  
F/Lt. L. Watson arrived to take over as Commanding Officer on the 17th., and then on the 22nd. one of the men received a rare mention in the Diary when Cpl. Whitlock, a Radar Operator, was admitted to 1 MRS. Towards the end of May there was a height test - and the camp received mention when a new tank and water piping were installed as part of the station alterations and improvements.

In true radar fashion after some worthwhile improvements had been made, June 1945 proved to be the last month of the 150 RS Diary records...and probably of the station itself. Firstly a Ford truck was taken off charge and allotted to ADHQ, and on June 14th., the station was taken over by F/O G.D.Mills whose duty was probably to see the unit 'wind down.'

On the 16th., two pilots and F/Lt. Morgan, the Adjutant of ADHQ, visited the station on inspection, and with mention of a Pay Parade and a visit from a Padre, so the records of 150 Radar ended.  
However, it is believed the station finally closed in July 1945.

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A FEW RECOLLECTIONS FROM MY 150 STAV. Ev. Wade.

The C.O. was a chap named Watson when I arrived at 150 in June 1945, and the station was soon to be closed. I don't recall the C.O.'s name when we moved out to return to Darwin, but I do know he and I drove one of those big Crossley trucks...and neither of us could drive! But we learnt pretty quickly on that trip up the highway to ADHQ.

150 had a good cricket team. Eddie and I were the opening bowlers - Jim Lillyman was the Captain as well as being a good wicket-keeper. I still remember getting 9 wickets for 9 runs when we played the C.C.C., and their Captain offered five shillings for each 'six' when he was bowling. As he ran the 'Odds and Evens' game at the gambling school at their Adelaide River camp, he obviously knew he would get it back...and more.

Eric O'Brien, our Fitter DMT used to drive us into the pictures where we used to buy a BIG bag of peanuts for sixpence, and the ground under our seats was covered in shells. After the show it was a race to be first out to avoid the bull-dust. 'O.B.' was good - and a bit mad like the rest of us then...he'd take to the trees, knocking down the small ones with the big bumper bar, thus getting first in line.  
As we were by then preparing to pack and leave Adelaide River, there wasn't much radar work. I helped on the motors as 'wash up' man. I was a 'mugganic,' - not a mechanic.

I can remember the nights in June were freezing cold, and we all slept with newspapers on our beds as insulation against the cold from underneath. Then came the palliase, two blankets, and we slept with our overalls on. Next morning by 9.30 we could be swimming in the beautiful swimming hole. Eight of us were posted to East Point to convert to Army Gun-laying radar so that we could do Met.work at Lee Point. Arthur Banks was our C.O. out there. We used to send balloons up with radiosondes and track them. We also did normal shifts at 59 RS.

Sorry I can't be of more help.

#####

THE FINAL DAYS OF 150 RADAR, ADELAIDE RIVER.

George Mills.  
(C.O. June/July '45)

I was posted to 150 RS in the first week of June, 1945, and supervised the dismantling, packing and movement of the unit to ADHQ, Darwin, in the last week of July '45 to a parking lot which must have been near the Administrative Building. I am a bit hazy about the actual location of the Admin. Building, but I am very clear that the Crossleys were parked only a short distance - less than a hundred yards - from the Officers' Mess where a party was held only a few days after our arrival to celebrate VJ Day.

I do not remember the name of the officer from whom I took over - nor anything about the actual take-over. However, I do remember that morale on the station seemed to be surprisingly high for a Unit which had been operating for some months on a 'stand-by' role, lacking a Controller, but otherwise at full operating strength. With one other exception, the only personnel who had full time duties were the Cooks and Mess Staff. The other exception was the Transport Section under the Fitter DMT, (O.B.) O'Brien ; the DMT, and several radar personnel. I doubt if I will remember any other names although some of the faces and personalities remain clearly with me. "O.B.'s" Section at the time were carrying out a first class overhaul of the Lister diesels.

After about a week's assessment and consideration, I felt that the Unit should go on a proper stand-by role, so I wrote to ADHQ proposing that the strength should be halved, the purpose being to get the Unit into good shape and settled for a 'Care and Maintenance' role. To my surprise, I received a reply in the form of a Newsletter style communication which I hadn't seen before nor since. The Newsletter seemed to express amazement that any C.O. should seek to do a job with fewer bodies! It also indicated that it would be in order for other officers to make similar proposals. In the light of the events about to occur, the idea was not as outrageous as might have appeared at the time.

So we went straight into the task of preparing 150 RS for a 'C and M' role by jacking up all the Crossleys onto blocks. Eric O'Brien's connection with the Army Workshop in Adelaide River secured the loan of several German Jacks which made the task quite simple and easy.

But the Crossleys were hardly off the ground before we received orders to pack up and move to Darwin. So down they came to be prepared for the move. The Crossleys had always been started up regularly, say about once a month for a 20 minute run. On this occasion, when the motors were run for a longer period to a working temperature, they suddenly cut out. On removing the cylinder heads, a build-up of ethyl lead was revealed which had caked with the extra heat and caused the valve stems to seize. Like the Ford 10's of the LW/AW power supplies, the Crossleys probably ran better on low octane fuel.

Once again, Eric's Army Workshop connections saved the day, for we were able to borrow valve refacing machinery, and we were able to effect first class repairs very quickly. It goes without saying that when we set off, Eric and his MT Section claimed all the positions as Driver and Off-sider on the big Crossleys, and they would surrender them to no superior rank!

The trip to Darwin was uneventful, and the Doover vehicles and trailers were taken 'on charge' by ADHQ. All Personnel from 150 were posted and scattered - some south, some to LORAN, some to other stations remaining on air for the time.

I conclude these notes with an account of what we would now call a BBQ - the 150 Radar Break-up Party with music and dancing, eating and drinking down on the sandy Adelaide River bank.

In every Radar Unit there was a group who, with little excuse and little encouragement, would organise a so-called 'do.' For this final great occasion the only task allocated to me was to invite a dozen ladies. To achieve this, I was helpfully pointed in the direction of the Allied Works Council HQ for the Darwin Area which was at Adelaide River, where about 12 young ladies worked under a fatherly Director. The interview was certainly not an easy one....I had to vouch for the good character and bona fides of each and every one of the RAAF Hosts and guarantee to see that the ladies were safely escorted home by mid-night. Of course, I would like to claim it was my persuasive powers that obtained permission for the ladies to join us, but I have to admit that the Director probably realised he would have had some pretty sulky female staff if he had refused!

The Venue on the Adelaide River bank had been decorated with about 2 dozen hurricane lamps - half with clear glass and half with ruby glass. There was always some item in our equipment which was practically useless except for such an occasion. The ladies were very impressed!

The function must have rated very highly among radar 'break-up' parties.

Well, Morrie, this is about 100% Mills' Memory - I hope it helps!

#####

#### CROSSLEYS, LISTERS AND M.T.

Eric O'Brien.

Now about 150 Radar. I don't recall when it was formed or when it went to Adelaide River. But I was posted there in mid January 1945 as the Fitter-DMT Diesel Operator. We had two 3 cylinder Listers on 2 wheel heavy trailers. The engines were in bad shape when I arrived and I honed the sleeves (as no new ones were available) to take the polish off them - I fitted new oversize rings, and Tom O'Connell, the driver from North Queensland, and I hand ground the crankshaft with emery strip and a micrometer borrowed from the Army. We got it to within 5 thou. of round, had the Army chaps run new white metal bearings for us, and then we scraped and blued and scraped and blued them until they were a great fit. We did each engine in turn and they ran well until the station closed in mid July 1945.

I was in charge of driving the Dover Crossley and getting the convoy to Darwin, near or just across the road from the Berrimah Hospital....either RIMU or ADHQ. I had Tom O'Connell as my driver and I can't remember who the other drivers were, but I think they were radar mechanics and an officer. After that I don't know what happened to them. We had 3 Crossleys, 1 '42 Lend Lease Chev, 1 Ford 5 ton Blitz and the trailers. The trucks were very heavy to steer and drive. The steering wheel shaft came up vertical from the floor and the steering wheel was not on a tilt, but level. I think that is about all I can recall about the vehicles.

We weren't able to do any fishing for relaxation at Adelaide River like we did at Truscott. But 'Blue' Kemp, Ken Eckley and I used to cut off the ends of 303 bullets and make a sort of a 'bang' when they hit the water which stunned the Barramundi. We used to sit in the trees for hours and wait for a nice Barra to swim past in the shallow waters of the Adelaide River, then aim right beside it to stun it, then jump down quickly and grab it.

A lot of the chaps who formed up with 154 Radar at Richmond were posted from 154 to 150 Radar, and so we got to know each other pretty well.

I hope this is of some help. Morrie,

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FROM THE FORMATION OF 150 RS.

Fred Box.

Morrie...if I ramble on inresponse to your letter, forgive me...the memory is fading!

150 Radar, G.C.I at Adelaide River.

I was posted from 20 RS at Nelsons Bay to Laverton, Victoria on 21st. May 1943 to form part of the team then assembling to form 150 RS. To the best of my recollection, we left Melbourne on 17th. June 1943, travelling by train to Adelaide, Terowie, and Quorn, then on to Alice Springs. After a few days in the Alice, we were loaded onto the big road convoy trucks with their canvas canopies for transport to Birdum, then train to Adelaide River and truck again to 44 Radar Wing at Coomalie...(at least for the personnel.)

I stayed at Wing from 28th. June 1943 until November or December when I was posted to 317 RS at the Drysdale River Mission. Shortly afterwards, 317 RS was moved to Sir Graham Moore Island.

I eventually came back and was posted to 150 Radar on 17th. August 1944 and left there late in October the same year. So my memories of 150 are fairly late in the order of things...F/Lt. MacDougall was the Commanding Officer and F/Lt. Wally Mailey was the Controller.

As for the original personnel....again I'm very vague: I can recall

Herb Bassett, Operator.

Ian Barnett, Operator.

Ralph Sierakowski, Mech.

Ken Leftner, Mech. (a twin)

Don Vallance, Operator.

Linley Rogers, Cook.

Ken Mountain, Operator.

I looked through my old photos and came up with a couple taken at Adelaide River in October 1944 - must have been just before posting home on leave.... no need to return them.

After leave over Christmas '44, I was posted to Townsville and spent quite a deal of time in the 'Transit Pool' before being posted to Port Moresby, Milne Bay and finally to Goodenough Island on 333 RS where I stayed until December 1945.

On reporting to the Discharge Depot I was told to 'Get Lost' until the end of January as nearly everyone was on leave.

I was eventually discharged on 11th. February 1946.

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THE 150 CAMP ON THE RIVER.

Keith Backshall.

I've been racking my brains trying to think back to my service at 150, which was from September 1944 until March 1945 when I was posted back to 32 RS at Rottneest.

While I was at Adelaide River, the station was on shift most of the time, as I remember doing many midnight to 8 a.m. shifts. We could have been on standby some nights, and there were lots of practice interceptions. As you know, the radar units were in Crossley trucks high off the ground compared to the Internationals of 154...there was very little air conditioning so that after a few hours in the Doover, it became pretty sweaty. The radio hook-up was by phone to Army operators somewhere in Darwin, and we spent a lot of time on the night shifts chatting with the phone operators. The 150 camp was in tents which were well set up with raised floors and cane entrance lobbies. The raised floors were necessary because of the flooding that occurred during the 'wet' in the January and February period. I shared a tent with Reg Butler and Percy Le Koo I remember.

The camp was about 5 miles from the Adelaide River town site and close to the Adelaide River itself, and we had a lovely swimming hole at the river where we had a rope suspended from a tree for fun. The main camp was a few hundred yards from the line of trucks that made up the 150 Doover. We had open air showers, and the 150 station was well set up by the time I arrived there. I remember that the next camp along the river road from us was the Army bakery and there was an Abattoir a little further along again.

We were taken to the open air pictures in Adelaide River a few times a week by RAAF tender; and we could hitch a ride up to Darwin by road to visit friends when we had a day off. The traffic on this road was enormous with strips and camps along the whole 60 mile stretch from Adelaide River to Darwin.

Shirley and I revisited this area in 1990 and we were impressed by the very well maintained War Cemetery. I went in a 4 wheel drive to try to locate the site of 150, but found it extremely difficult as the roads were mainly overgrown with scrub. We bumped into a fellow who had just bought a large parcel of land in the area, and he was very interested when I told him of the history of the property. He took us to the site of the old Army bakery and the concrete slabs and part of the old ovens still intact. From this position, I was able to find where I thought 150 had been located, and was able to find tent sites and concrete slabs from the kitchen and Mess. We then scratched our way to the river and identified our swimming hole.

I'm sorry I can't help with info on the arrival or departure of the station, Morrie, but mine was a short stay only in the middle of station life. I am enclosing the only photos I have of 150.

Well Morrie, must sign off, and I do hope this little bit on life at 150 will help.

#####

150 IN '45.

Ian Grayling.

I went to 150 about January '45 to about March. Radarwise, I think nothing much happened. We were nearly as isolated as the place I'd just come from .....Port Keats. I missed my Native friends and had nowhere much to walk. The C.O. was 'Snow' Waldron. On my first night there I visited a neighbouring tent and met four men (men? - more like boys) one of whom was Bryan Wardle who was later with me at 154 at Iruscott. Bryan introduced me all round this card playing group, and amid the cheerful chatter he introduced Horace. "How do you do Horace," I said politely, and soon went back home. Some days later I found I'd met F/O Orriss who I think was some sort of Assistant C.O. or Controller (I wasn't politically inclined even then as you see.)

Jim Setches was clerk, and who later became a Postings Clerk at Radar HQ. The Operators did a 12 hour night shift and had a bed on the Ops table to be near the phone when the Control Room rang us every hour, spitefully, just to wake us up. According to Bryan, this arrangement had the C.O.'s approval. As I recall, we NEVER operated in 'search' mode. The camp water then came by truck and each day somebody had to hand pump the water up into the overhead tank which took  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour daily. Some of the men did swim in the Adelaide River which was supposed to be full of crocs. The Army Butchers camp was close by as was a large Army vegetable garden, and the butchers were said to catch crocs on meat hooks and rope, using steak for bait. One day our happy little fox terrier, (Rosie?) came home with all the skin off her short tail. Crocs again?

As I said, Morrie....Not much to write about. Sorry!

#####

RETURN TO ADELAIDE RIVER IN '92.

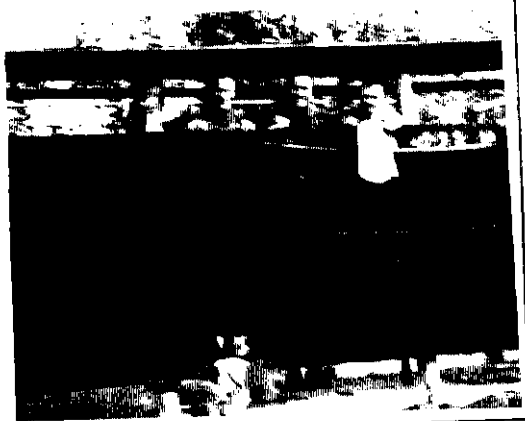
Bob McDonnell.

Your enquiry about a map of Adelaide River reminded me of a funny story. In '92 we travelled to Darwin for the 50 year anniversary of the Battle of Darwin. We spent quite a bit of time at the specially set up Information Bureau at Adelaide River. There was a beautiful relief map of the whole Adelaide River area - it showed the river, the town, the high and low ground etc, - but more importantly it had marked on it in proper location what was claimed to be 'all' units stationed in the area.

Of course, I asked the gentleman in charge where 150 Radar Station was situated on his map.

He looked at me very puzzled as if I had asked for the Sydney Harbour bridge, and said that he and his committee who had built the relief map had never heard of a radar station there, and asked me where it had been situated. I showed him to the best of my memory and ability where I thought it had been, but I'm still certain he didn't believe me. We drove out to the site, but there was no sign at all of the location. It was one I had a reasonable memory of as that was where I received my crook ears which I copped when diving in the river - not really that far from where today the crocs jump out of the water for dead chooks. I can't recall any RAAF camps on the map, but I think 44 Radar Wing was down there somewhere. The rest were all Army camps, and obviously the original map had been drawn by the Army and for the Army.

#####



(From Top down.)

Keith Backshall undergoes treatment from Athol Kemp and Harry Cribb. Obviously a shortage of combs, or perhaps tangled locks!

Fred Box 'at home'

(From Top down.)

Reg Butler and 'Norm' at 150 in October 1944.

All showered before the evening meal....one couldn't appear hot and sweaty in the Mess!

## 'OFF DUTY' TIME AT ADELAIDE RIVER.

Laurie Norris.

After the dry and dusty conditions of the camp out at Truscott, my arrival at the 150 Radar Station at Adelaide River was a welcome change. In addition to the plentiful fresh food supplies, the very popular highlight and recreation was the large swimming hole in the river and not far from the camp. Here the operators gathered in their off duty hours to keep fit and to keep cool and comfortable. I had never learned to swim, and at first I spent my time in the shallows and eyeing off the raft out in the middle. I became the subject of much advice to jump into deep water and thus learn the art of swimming...and learn it quickly.

I finally took a deep breath and my courage in hand and I struck out for the raft. By the halfway mark I felt I may as well have been travelling to the moon...but somehow half drowning and with a stomach full of river water, I climbed triumphantly onto the floating wooden platform. Expecting roars of approval from my mates, I looked around, but found they had gone and had all now wandered off to lunch. Somehow I made it back to shore.

Early next morning, and buoyed up with a bit more confidence, I went for my first solo swim. Time arrived for breakfast, so I climbed from the swimming hole and up the muddy bank to find strange tracks leading from the water. I asked a passing Aboriginal stockman what the tracks were and he replied "Big croc been seen in the river boss!" Needless to say swimming was off the agenda for quite a while, but with the blind courage of youth we returned in a few days assuming there was safety in numbers. Perhaps the croc was the smart one...he apparently departed the area.

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Some miles east from the camp along the Mt. Bunday Road was an Army station where cattle were slaughtered to provide meat supplies for many of the Darwin camps. An Army sergeant was stationed there alone, and evidently finding his life rather lonely, he invited two of us to visit him. As part of the arrangement for the day, he brought two riding horses. Never having ridden before, I provided the Aboriginal stockmen with much amusement as I desperately clung on to the horse's mane for stability, and tried not to be left behind by the other two experienced riders. Having no idea where the radar camp was, I couldn't afford to lose sight of them in the thick bush.

After what seemed hours of travel through endless scrub and bush, we finally arrived at what seemed to me 'heaven on earth,' with an endless supply of barbecued steak and ice cold bottles of Fosters...the stuff of which dreams are made. Well, that's how it seemed to us. Funny I did not seem to have much trouble on the return journey to the 150 camp. Truth to tell, I do not even remember the return journey at all. But I do know I had a greatly improved opinion of the Army and their hospitality.

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The station Diary records a 'hostile' on 3rd. March 1945, and station legend suggests this was indeed the last 'hostile' over the Darwin area. But on 12th. June 1944 150 Radar effectively put the Spitfires on the tail of a Jap recce which was shot down over the Anson Bay area, and some miles north of the radar station on Peron Island. This was the last enemy plane shot down over the Darwin area, though a recce was destroyed the following month over Truscott.



I can't find my pay-book because I put it away safely! But I must have reached 105 FCU about May 1944, and because I asked for a posting to the islands to the north, I was posted south to Adelaide River where 150 Radar was located, and there I lodged in the Ops' Tent with (I think) Ian Grayling, Jack Kennedy and Paul Hicks..all friendly fellows, although Jack spent his off-shift hours lying on his hessian-covered bed frame endlessly repeating a popular and well known wish upon all on Air Board! He wanted to go south to his young wife and his Football!  
The C.O. was F/Lt. A.H.McDougall who was a farmer in the northern districts of NSW who had trained as a Radar Officer - fair, exacting, and he managed a good and pleasant unit.

We lived well - probably because of our worldly clerk, Fergy (Ferguson) who had been a salesman for Pepsodent (he had the necessary smile). We obtained meat from the Army Field Butchery farther out on the Mount Bunday Road; fruit and vegies from the Army gardens between us and the Adelaide River crossing by the Highway; and beer and 'lolly water' from RAAF Stores north up the Highway which we sometimes swapped for the other goodies. Our Medical Orderly was Jim Campbell, another mature man - a Queenslander who had run a wool scouring plant, and who was a good Medic. He could cure tinea with Gentian Violet or Whitfeld's Ointment, and who could chat to his younger off-siders.

We were on duty in the Operations truck, but the station was on 'standby,' which meant attending to the phone...to the C.O. - to 105 - and to anyone else asked for. We used to tune to Darwin Radio or whatever, and this was played through the phones into the tents, and if anyone at 105 wanted to speak to the C.O. and couldn't raise us because of the music, there was Hell to pay! There was one day we got a screaming order down the phone and also on the R.T. that an unidentified plane had passed over Darwin and was heading south. We were 'On Air' in seconds and picked up the plane slightly east of north at 80 miles which was about our limit and at a great height (was it 21000 feet?) We latched on to it while the Controller and the C.O. were yelling at us; but we had large ear-phones on and couldn't hear what our superiors were saying. Eventually it faded away to the east and we never knew what it was - the last Jap recce - or a Spittie with the IFF switched off or whatever. There was a 'blister' from the C.O. of 105; but then we were praised for 150's speed and accuracy in plotting the thing.

We also sometimes picked up S/Ldr. Clyde Fenton (the 'Doc' of Territory fame), coming home to Batchelor where his 6 Com Flight was based, on an unexpected bearing after having dropped in on an old friend somewhere, or after calling at an out-of-the-way Radar station!  
After our C.O. 'Snow' Waldron left on posting to 154, we had F/Lt. Mailey who was pleasant, if somewhat erratic at times - particularly with firearms. Eventually the Sgt. Guard took his Tommy gun for servicing, removed the 'H' piece or something, and requisitioned for a replacement which never arrived. Perhaps the requisition didn't either! But we used to be frightened at bursts of Tommy-gun fire going over our tent - and so our problem was solved.

When we went swimming in our water-hole in the Adelaide River, we first stood on the bank, aiming our rifles at the water and firing many rounds to scare off the crocs - then one poor soul was forcibly pushed in and helped out. If there were no ripples in the water, we then dived in yelling loudly!

In October at the start of the 'wet' season, after repeated requisitions for new tents, we were hit by a late-afternoon storm, and our superior and charming Ops Tent was split open from the top. We patched it with some old tarps from the store and it lasted for a while; but within a week or two the river rose in a matter of hours - to the order of twenty feet or so, and the Mount Bunday Road was soon covered, and the whole of our camp was flooded. Our tent was on a platform of logs and filling, and it was covered by the rising waters. Our boots were floating, along with cocoa and biscuits from our lockers and boxes. Not only did our things on the floor get saturated, but later we found that termites had eaten their way into boots, wooden boxes, and had even made a nest in a rifle barrel. At times like this the lily-covered ponds to the south of us became one huge sea of water; and when the ground warmed up there was growth in the eucalypts - the shrubs - and in the grass - everywhere. The only animals that came near the camp were donkeys - feral donkeys no doubt - that made horrible breathing noises in the night - a wild buffalo perhaps?

150 Radar was very much a stand-by station with few aircraft flying nearby - unlike 154. Aircraft based on the strips along the Stuart Highway usually flew north. We were brought 'On Air' for emergencies - the unidentified aircraft - 'Doc' Tanton - height tests - practice interceptions and such-like.

I hope that if you're still reading this, you have found something of interest from these 55 year old recollections.

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THE OPERATORS' TENT AT 150 RADAR..... This rather superior tent was comfortable and roomy, and would have housed several successive 'generations' of operators. Unfortunately it was destroyed in a late afternoon storm as the 'wet' season began in 1944.

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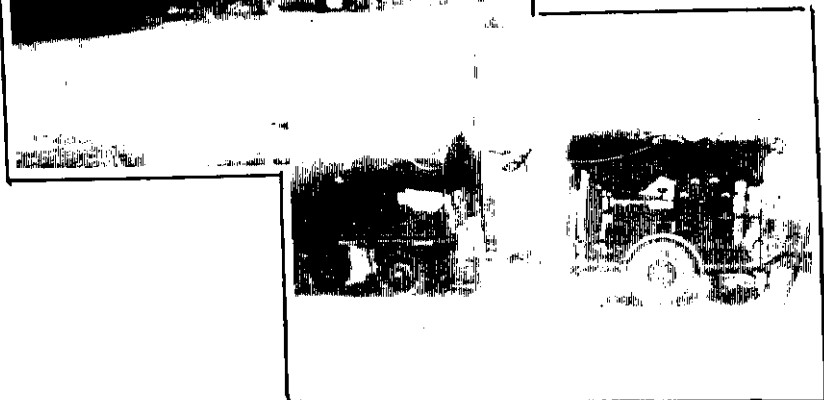
*The 150 Swimming Hole...a rather strange ritual before entering,  
particularly if croc. foot marks sighted in the sand!*

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*The 150 Doover line-up;  
and the two wheel trailer  
and Lister 3 cylinder  
generator.*

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### 150 Radar Personnel.

The list of Personnel for 150 Radar is far from complete, as the Personnel Occurrence Reports - the best possible record of men posted to a unit - have been lost or destroyed. Consequently, the only names to be recorded are those remembered or noted on photographs.

#### Commanding Officers.

P/O J.B.Hughes.  
F/O E.J.Bass. (Temp.)  
F/Lt A.H.McDougall.  
F/O W.W.Waldron.  
P/O H.F.Orriss.(Temp.)  
F/Lt W.A.Mailey.  
F/Lt L.H.Watson.  
F/O G.D.Millis.

#### Controllers.

S/Ldr. R.M.Brand.  
F/Lt P.H. Ash.  
F/Lt W.A.Mailey.  
F/O J.Dohrmann.  
F/O H.Cumes.  
F/O W.W.Waldron.  
P/O H.F.Orriss.  
F/O F.Dale.  
F/Lt W.Mailey.  
F/O C.A.Hogben.

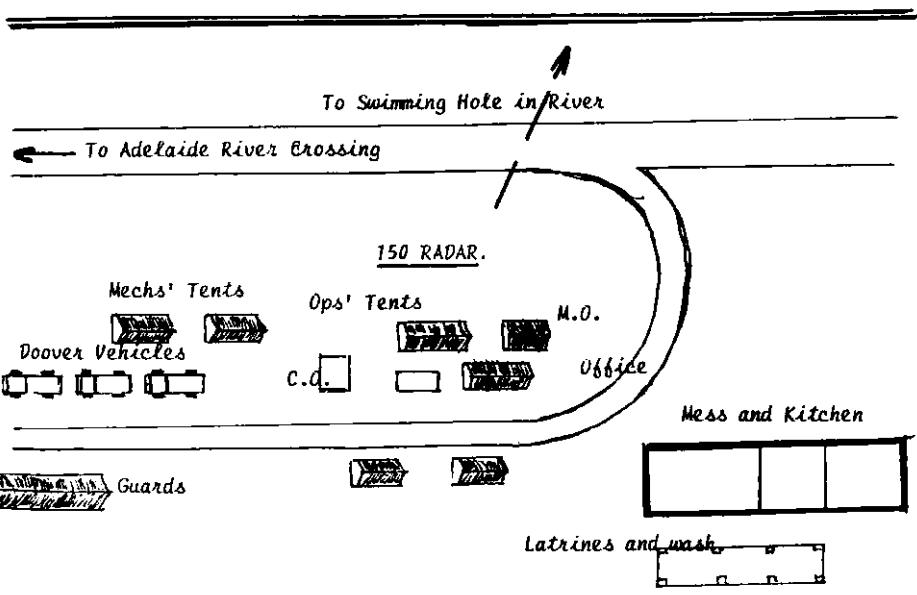
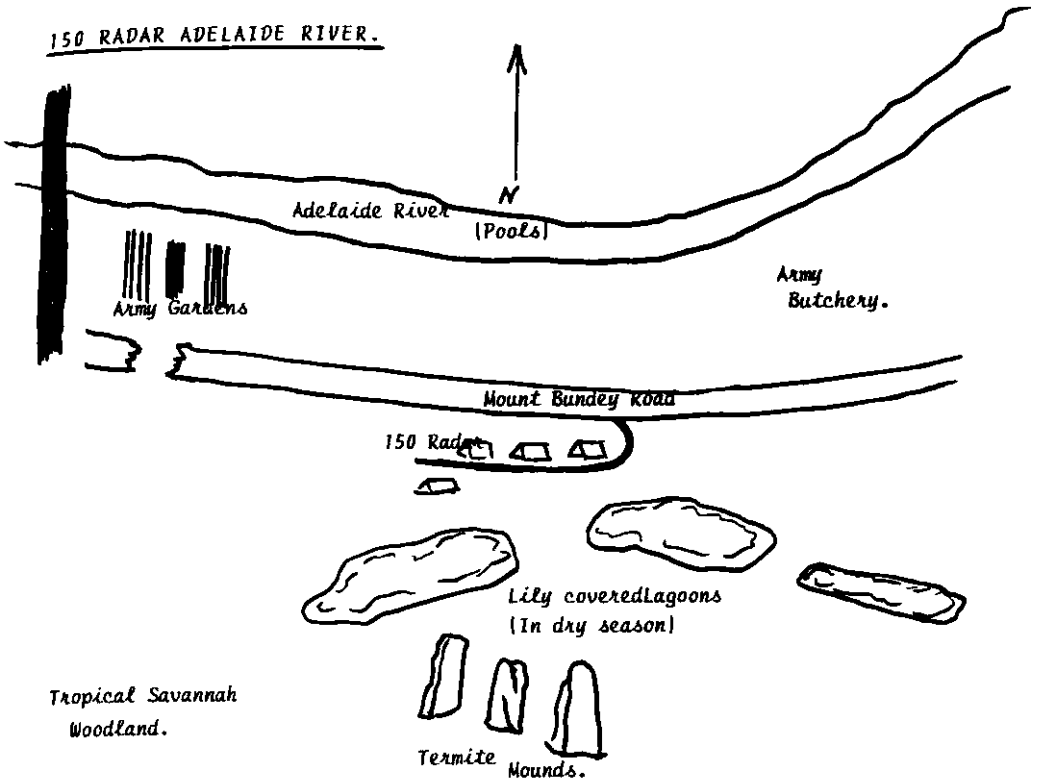
K.Backshall. Sgt. R. Op.  
E. O'Brien. Fitter DMT.  
A.Dennison. R/Mech.  
R.McDonnell. R/Op.  
I.Grayling. "  
B.Wardle. "  
I.Leith. R/Mech.  
E.Wade.  
F.Box.  
F.Moore.  
P.Hicks.  
J.Setches.  
D.Taggart.  
P.Lee Koo.  
R. Enright. DMT.  
J.Kennedy.  
- Ferguson.  
J.Campbell.  
I.O'Connell.

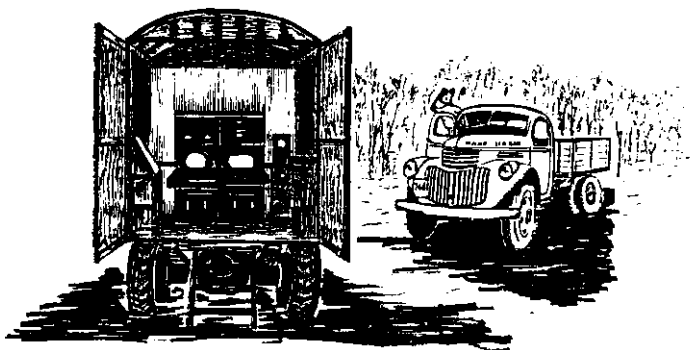
C.L.Norris. R/Op.  
R.Butler.  
- Stempel.  
W.Langcake. R/Op.  
P.Bennett.  
K.Eckley. R/Op.  
A.Kemp. "  
H.Bassett.  
R.Sierakowski.  
D.Vallance.  
I.Barnett.  
K.Leftner.  
K.Rogers.  
K.Mountain.  
L.Westiver.  
- Whitlock.

An incomplete record of Personnel.



150 RADAR ADELAIDE RIVER.





### IN CONCLUSION.

*It seems almost a certainty that two CROSSLEY GCI stations, or 'Doovers,' came complete with Mk.V Radar gear to Australia with 'Capstan,' the code-word hiding the arrival of the Spitfires in 1942. One line of Crossleys first set up with a unit on Ash Island near Newcastle - then transferred to a couple of other eastern stations before moving on to Queensland and eventually to Merauke. The other unit is the one we have followed at 132 and 150, and which played a very active role in Australia's defence.*

*These unique vehicles which could almost be called a relic of the first world war, have since disappeared from all sight and knowledge....but who knows....one just might be hiding somewhere in a farmer's barn and fowl-house.*

*What a find if one of these vehicles should be discovered! There were - I believe - 6 Crossleys with Capstan, 3 of which became the heart of 132 Radar. And as the English and Australian Spitfire Squadrons now form an honoured part of Australia's war-time history, so too should the GCI radar station that directed them - particularly 132 and its Crossley line-up from Knuckey's Lagoon at the 9 mile, and as 150 down at Adelaide River.*

*One of these cumbersome big vehicles, and its hand-turned aerial and equipment, deserve an honoured place in the Australian War Memorial Museum at Canberra.*

*State of the Art in their day - they would now appear as primitive pioneering gear when compared with the equipment now used by the Defence Forces.*

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