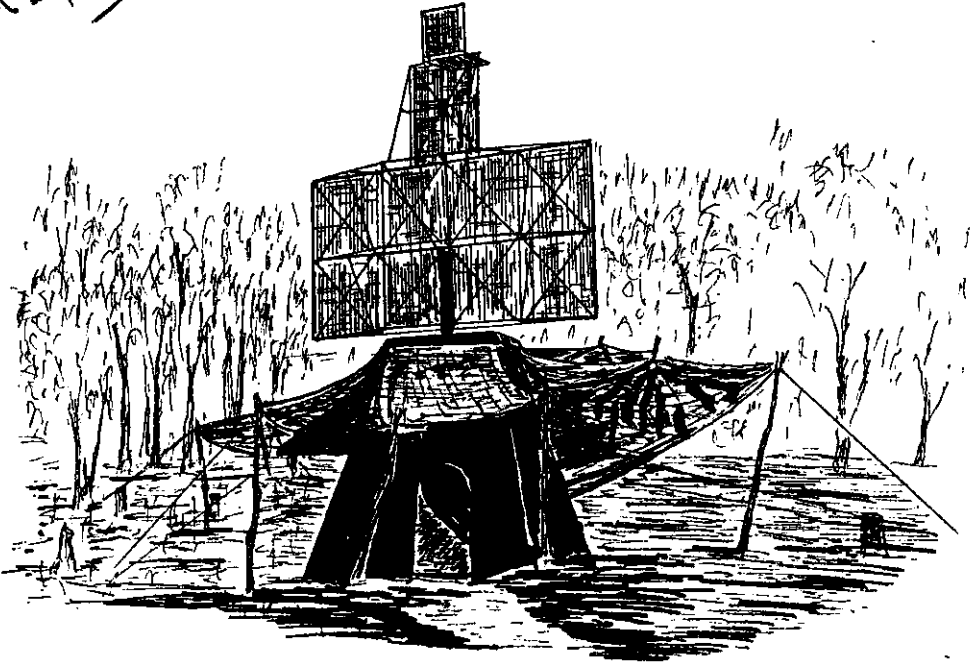


R 30/7/45



319 RADAR

1943 - 45.

MASCOT

FENTON

DRYSDALE

TRUSCOTT

SOURCE MATERIAL FOR 319 HISTORY

^{PUBLISHED}
being prepared by Allan Ferguson.

319 RADAR, 1943 - 45.

The material in this booklet represents the source information from which Allan Ferguson has compiled a small History of 319 Radar Station. ~~This will be made~~ ^{THE HISTORY IS} available for general circulation, whereas this booklet will not be available, other than to those who contributed to it. Those persons are: J.H.Reen, C. Hammer. F.Castelli, D.Hibbins, A.Ferguson, M.Fenton, and R.Enright. Also RAAF Historical which supplied a copy of the Station Diary.

October 1991.

1992

A FEW NOTES ON DARWIN RADAR.

No Radar Station was 'On Watch' when Darwin was bombed in February, 1942, though a station was then being installed at Dripstone Caves, just a short distance from the town. 31 Radar came 'On Air' in March, 1942, and immediately located an attacking force of Japanese planes approaching.

As equipment and trained men became available, so a chain of stations was positioned across the entire northern coastline. Some equipment came from England, but an increasing number of stations were installed using Australian made equipment, which, when designed in lightweight form, proved to be probably the best 'search' Radar used in the Pacific area because of its efficiency and portability.

The equipment used in the N.W.A. was known by code letters:-

English equipment for instance was :

COL	Chain Overseas Lowflying.
ACO	Advanced Chain Overseas.
COL.GCI	COL Ground Control Interception
RWG.GCI	Canadian built GCI

Australian equipment was

AW Air Warning

and the redesigned equipment was

LWAW Light Weight Air Warning

The COL, ACO, AW, and LWAW were long range search equipment, capable of detecting aircraft at a range of 100 miles plus. The GCI equipment provided the means of taking over a plot and directly controlling flights of defending Allied fighter planes when intercepting enemy aircraft and 'X' plots. The long range stations were usually located on lonely islands, capes and remote locations where living conditions were very basic with few comforts or amenities of any sort. The GCI stations had limited range, and were located usually close to the town or the base it was intended to protect.

In all, some 25 or more Radar Stations were located across the North Western Area controlled from Darwin, and many more newly formed Radar Stations and men 'staged' through Darwin 'en route' to the more northern areas, New Guinea and so on.

The histories of all N.W.A. stations was short - mostly about two years - with a few of the first stations being 'on watch' perhaps three years. But in that short time much happened.

Air raids gradually lessened with the consequent relaxation of 'watch conditions;' more efficient or new equipment was installed at some stations; personnel were posted and changed; camp conditions mostly improved; and a few radar stations moved on or changed locations.

319 Radar formed at Mascot in April 1943 - came 'On Air' at Fenton in Junewith enemy air activity still frequently occurring over the area.

The station moved to Drysdale in March, 1944, and followed 58 OBU to the new Truscott airfield on Anjo Peninsula in August 1944. Within two weeks of the cessation of hostilities, the station packed and moved out again, finally to be disbanded in October 1945. In all that time, the station operated what was essentially its original equipment - the LWAW Mk. 1.

319 RADAR,

Some notes on its History.

12/4/43 - 27/8/43

1. MASCOT. Packing Up.

Names. Unfortunately, I don't retain any muster lists or rosters, and the only names I can recall are:

AC1 R.J.Adams, (Guard.)
Cpl. Flood, (Stores Clerk.)
LAC Wiltshire (Radar Operator.)

The RDF Stations forming at Mascot were housed in 'Army' huts on the island block now occupied by the multi-storey car park, with their officers, and other officers servicing the RAAF Mascot establishments housed in the Royal Aero Club Building - the Australian Airlines terminal is now opposite.

With much of my own time, and that of our sole NCO committed for requisitioning, and chasing stores etc, the many fetch-carry-pack tasks arising could not all get supervision. The airmen proved an honest, reliable, and resourceful bunch. Work teams showed considerable initiative, and I can't recall any case where a job was 'stuffed up.'

An irate young Army officer turned up at Mascot one day, to point out our ammunition had arrived in the Sydney goods yard, and as I did not have an armed guard waiting to receive it, it could have been stolen. To illustrate which point he had broached the consignment, and stolen a few rounds. He was pacified, thanked deeply for his interest, and the ammunition collected. While travelling, a small quantity was carried with us, the bulk went in with the stores.

One airman blotted the Unit record by going AWL, to be returned by the Service Police. Still serving his sentence on Unit departure, he travelled with us with two guards, under close arrest.

The Unit left Sydney by rail on 18th. May.

While at Mascot, I lent several operators to a friend with a COL/GCI, operating from the sporting oval not far away, (operating, but probably still in a training phase) There were rumours of the installation having some confusion with a side lobe echo (of Harbour Bridge, or a Blue Mountain feature perhaps) resulting in the fighters being sent up to look for an intruder. The truth of which rumour, and whether 319's operators were involved are matters I've no hard data on.

2. JOURNEY TO DARWIN.

The Sydney - Melbourne trip was uneventful. In Melbourne, all had leave until the evening departure of the Adelaide train. Strictly, the 'prisoner' should have been lodged in the cells, but his guards pleaded for him and he was released in their charge.

All members, including prisoner and guards, assembled at Spencer St. in the evening. It appeared possible not all had spent a fully testotal day, but they all arrived in plenty of time.

Approaching Ballarat, a rumour reached me that our prisoner might make a break (he had Ballarat contacts). He was seated between his guards, who were each handed a clip of .303's. He didn't bolt.

Whilst this comedy was staged, the unit piper played Scottish airs out in the carriage vestibule. He had brought his pipes along, and skirled away happily from time to time. It was a trip to remember.

In Adelaide, the staging camp was at the Wayville Showgrounds, and we bedded down in the animal pens.

Next day, changing to narrow-gauge at Terowie, and signing (as OC Train) for one train, with listed (damages and deficiencies), we proceeded onward by Ghan.

There were only two carriages on the train, and a number of airmen travelled in the cabs of new Army semi-trailers, loaded on flat bed trucks. The trip was slow and uneventful, and the country depressing-ly desolate, enlivened only by wandering herds of donkeys. Leaving Oodnadatta, in a sad salute to the last pub in civilisation, there was some tooting of truck horns. A signal awaited 'OC Train' at the next stop, pointing out the risk of running down truck batteries, etc. etc.

Approaching Alice Springs, an Army party boarded at a level crossing outside the town, to collect the reserve and undistributed rations. A similar, but official party appeared on the station platform - disappointed at having been beaten by the 'pirate party' yet again! Rumour had it that our surplus sugar may have become feedstock for a distillery out in the scrub.

Alice Springs transit camp was bleak, with ice on the ablation troughs in the morning. Our onward transport was in Army semi-trailers, travelling for 6 days and staging overnight in Army transit camps. These were basic, but well set up. I recall only the showers, which on arrival even in late afternoon, were often too hot to use. There were often long exposed pipes running over the hot ground. Repeating the journey, southbound, in late '44, coke evaporative coolers had been added to the showers to overcome this fault.

This whole transport operation was impressively handled, and I received some 15 pages of paperwork covering all necessary information and precautions. Some of these make interesting and amusing reading, in retrospect:-

On acclimatisation. . . .

1. 'These instructions. . . . are the outcome of practical experience with men and of many experiments on other animals, for instance, rabbits, dogs and monkeys.'
2. 'even delicate racehorses or polar bears can be acclimatised to withstand great heat.'

No. 44 RDF WING. (Coomalie Creek)

Met by the Wing Equipment Officer at Adelaide River, we were ferried to Wing H/Q. (Sunday 30th. May 1943.) Our stores, accompanied by several of our guards to prevent pilfering, arrived about the same time.

The first of the RDF Wings, No. 44 was formed in mid December, 1942. Its H/Q was located on the west side of the Stuart Highway, a few miles south of the Batchelor turn-off (about the 59 mile??).

The C.O. was now F/Lt R.W. Wadsley, a versatile engineer who had formed the party which toured the Australian coastline selecting Radar sites. (I met again with S/L Wadsley in Tasmania some years later where he was an engineer with the Hydro-electric Commission.) He was shortly to be succeeded by F/Lt R.R. Chilton previously of Radar School, Richmond. The Wing Administrative Officer was F/Lt C.F. Morath and I recall also an F/O Ryan, Technical Officer. Unfortunately, I cannot recall the name of the Equipment Officer, who was to give us considerable help, even rushing urgent Ford 10 spares down to Fenton personally. There were several other Junior Officers whose names and roles I have forgotten.

The meals and comparative comfort of Wing were welcome after our Ghan and bus travel; enthusiasm was somewhat less for the obligatory P.T. turnout before breakfast.

44 Wing Mess projected an earthly practical outlook, displaying a Unit crest with motto - 'Nil Bastardo Carborundum' (subsequently changed to a more genteel 'Per Ardua Ad Astra.')

After a few days there, a senior officer offered his sympathy - I obviously had a rogue or two in 319, he considered, as petty thefts had increased since we arrived. Accordingly, it had been decided, all airmen of the Unit would undertake a punitive route march, with full

RECALLED LATER TO BE F/C PARTINGTON

packs.

I decided to lead the march.

Men and equipment moved to the Fenton site by road on 5th. June. The Radar Wings were disbanded in the latter half of 1944, and the Radar stations placed under the control of the Fighter Control Units. No. 44 Wing was disbanded on 28th. Aug. 1944. I happened to pass through Wing H/Q on 19th. August, the night of 'Ye Olde Farewell Doo' in the Messes, and I retain a souvenir card of that function, its cartoon illustration might be of some use in the history. For the substantial achievements of the Wing, see Hall, p. 211. There were some critics, however, the difficulties of No. 38, C. Fourcroy, naturally produced friction. (Hall, p. 214)

FENTON OPERATIONS.

4. 1. Establishing Camp.

On arrival, initial effort concentrated on pitching the standard Army 16 x 16 tents, dotting these irregularly around the site, partly shadowed by trees where possible. Tent flies provided temporary shelter for mess and cookhouse, and later, for the Ford 10's.

The site had been occupied before, apparently by No. 309, later of Goulburn Island. Bar ground clearing, their only relic was a deep holer thunderbox, tastefully sited amongst trees. It served us well, but had to be screened later to meet the objections of American nurses driving along the road.

On arrival, we found a full water tank waiting, sitting on a shallow sand bed. Later raised on a tank stand, it was filled regularly by a water tanker servicing the area.

Construction of permanent buildings (all on the camp side of the road) followed quickly; cookhouse, messes, ablution (shower) block and latrines being completed by 16th. July.

4. 2. NAME OF AREA.

I have no recollection of locality or strip being termed FENTON officially whilst I was there, but the LONG strip, although not then occupied, was already known by that name.

I recall first noting the name FENTON from a post-war map.

4. 3. STATION POSITION.

Working briefly in Darwin in the 70's, I revisited the old 319 site. It is reached from the Stuart Highway, turning off 38 miles south of Adelaide River. This turn-off, on the southern side, was marked on RAC maps i.e. the strip map Katherine - Darwin, as Ooloo, 39 miles. It now serves the Ooloo station. On the highway, it falls between the Green Ant Creek crossing and the Fountain Head turn-off, north side. This turn off road runs roughly south-west and the 319 campsite is about 4.5 km along it, campsite on the eastern side, and Doover/Ops room and Ford 10's on the western side. This road and the Fenton and Long strips appear on the 1:250000 sheet, 'Pine Creek, SD52-8.'

More detail, particularly of the many tracks in the area, appears on the old 1 mile series topographical map 'Tipperary' particularly on the 1954 re-issue, 'Radioactive Anomalies,' showing the Bureau of Mineral Resources scintillometer anomalies.

Once operational in 1943, Fighter Sector reported our tracks paralleled rather than coincided with tracks from other stations. A compass and chain survey was hence made to check our grid position, basing it on the position of an Australian Army AA searchlight at the Fenton strip, which had been fixed by the Australian Army Survey Corps. With the searchlight beam vertical, it was observed in the early dusk from two observing points, and these triangulated to our antenna position.

Landmarks for the 319 site are now a 4" steel pipe, some 7-8 ft. high, and painted in yellow and black stripes, carrying the number 18. This is on the eastern side, with the various concrete floors; a circle of earth filled 44 gallon drums remains on the western side, from an anti-blast wall.

4. 4. EQUIPMENT ASSEMBLY.

To assist setting up, Wing H/Q added two experienced men to the Unit team, an operator and a mechanic. Setting up the equipment proceeded without any major hitches that I can recall.

4. 5. POWER SUPPLY.

Power mains were carried across the road, to light all tents and permanent buildings. In such a bush installation, particularly during the wet, there is a higher risk of leakage and possible shock than in a domestic installation in the suburbs. Earthing was therefore via a centre-tapped lamp sphere, placing each of the mains 115V above ground. This old U.S. distribution scheme was not generally familiar, and probably did not survive long. It offered lamp indication of any serious earth leak from either main.

In other installations, I found Ford 10 sets very reliable. 319's sets seemed to display a string of faults.

Their fan bearing was carried on a special bracket assembly, welded up from light steel strap. On both sets, this strap cracked on bends or welds, lowering the fan into the radiator core. (These are the faults of 23/6, 30/6, and 16/7.). Failure on 23/6. scrapped both fan and core as I recall. We ran the set with a 44 gallon drum of water for cooling until a spare bracket was received (probably the occasion the Wing E/O rushed it down personally.). In later failures, we had one which only scored the core before shutdown, and the fan was successfully cut back to a two blade.

On 3/8, a rear alternator ball-race started rotating in its housing. A nearby machine shop, servicing Airfield Construction Squadron equipment, built up the housing again by brazing, and the alternator was re-assembled on 5/8.

4. 6. MOTOR TRANSPORT.

The small, utility size Ford brought from Sydney was considered unsuitable by Wing H/Q who exchanged it for an open tray truck instead. (a Chev I think.).

Driving to Fenton one day with a crew of airmen seated in the tray, our vehicle was side-swiped by a U.S. truck of the 2024th. Quartermaster Trucking Company. Nobody was injured, but our truck tray was shifted considerably on the chassis. The U.S. driver was a Negro, one Technical Sergeant David Evans, with a rich southern drawl and accent which made him doubly hard to follow. The 2024th. had only shifted in a few days before, to a radio welcome by Tokyo Rose, and were probably still in 'culture shock.'.

Fortunately, one 319 airman had been a truck body builder, so with his expertise, planks acquired from a timber stack nearby, and hardware from Wing, satisfactory repairs were done on the unit.

Later, when the Fitter DMT attempted to start the truck one morning, the engine seized. Sand was found in the sump. This was about the same time as the flare incident recounted later, and general feeling linked the two incidents to probable fifth column activity. The guards patrolled the operation area only, and vehicle storage area was on the opposite side of the road.

As to the entry on 12.7.43. . . 'Con rod on Ford MT broke - unit replaced' I don't think our transport was still a Ford, and I can't remember what replacement action followed the engine seizure.

4. 7. COMMUNICATIONS.

Our basic 'telling circuit' was provided by an AT5/AR8 combination with mains powerpack, operating on W/T only. When first set up, 22/6, we couldn't raise Fighter Sector (as I recall, we could hear them). A young W/O suddenly appeared at the station, sized up the situation, and bet he could raise Sector on a 5 ft length of wire, handheld. He won his bet! Trouble was in driving the AT5 aerial coupling to load up the transmitter - we just didn't have the knack. The only other W/T problem I recall was on 21/8, during a night raid on Fenton; suddenly we were not getting any acknowledging 'R's' from Sector. It was frustrating to have enemy plots piling up with no outlet, so we tapped phone lines passing along the road to endeavour to get contact with Sector. We first raised a sleepy Yank at some 'Rest and Recuperation' camp out in the scrub - then an irate Australian Major of the Fenton AA Battery. We continued to pass our raw (unfiltered) plots to him (he was employing the same co-ordinate grid as the RAAF, and welcomed our Data).

There were subsequent rumours as to the cause of this communication outage, and of the simple measure taken to ensure there was no repetition. I do not recall any authoritative statement on the incident.

We did not have any separate administrative W/T circuit; admin. traffic fortunately light, came in during slack periods on the telling circuit, and hence often late at night. Being in cypher, and that sometimes corrupt, it was a most unwelcome chore to decypher. I recall two messages - the first described in detail the new arrangements for Personnel reporting to Eastern Area (Sydney) H/Q over weekends, as a stand-down day was now changed. The second was an order that airmen denting their hats WAAF fashion were to cease doing so immediately.

Fighter Sector produced Summaries of Radar station performance during raids, and one such reported 319 as 'Off the Air' due to enemy action during the raid of July 6th. This was an error, and was corrected by a message through Wing :- 319 and 317, (then apparently at Old Drysdale) shared a W/T frequency, and it was 317 that had closed down.

When we arrived at Fenton, it appeared that several other units had recently left our vicinity:- there were many runs of twisted-pair (Don 5) phone cable along the road edges - going nowhere. We gathered up a lot of this and joined it up to run a phone line to the RAAF Sigs. Unit at the Fenton strip, about 4 miles. This Unit supplied the signals link between the U.S. squadrons and NWA H/Q, and could switch our phone through to Wing H/Q - useful when we needed spares in a hurry. Our phone line only survived a few weeks, however, then a bushfire burnt a large section of it.

During an early night raid, the aircraft were closing range with little or no bearing change, so we phoned RAAF Signals to warn them - to find they had already been warned. So when we lost the target at close range, we called to tell them the raiders had disappeared. In a few minutes they called back - 'Thanks mate - we're being bombed right now!' I'd forgotten that with our ~~50 sec pulse~~, we'd lose the aircraft in our ground pulse!

I left the Unit one Sunday morning, to attend Mass at the strip. From which I was summoned to an urgent phone call from the unit. A man claiming to be the A.C.C. had entered the Operations Area, flourished his 'Radar Pass', and asked to see inside the Doover. The guards said they didn't know anything about such passes. He could get in only if he came along with the boss. He left, asking that a message be passed to me to meet him at a road junction near the strip. I did that. He proved to be Air Commodore 'Daddy' Bladen all right, but his complaints were most reasonable.

- . There was no NCC in charge. (the only corporal was over at the camp site.).
- . Some men were unshaven.
- . Most men wore black (not khaki) socks.

REES LATER CHANGED THIS TO 20

Told Stores were out of khaki socks, and we couldn't even get Comforts Fund blades (which were ghastly anyhow) he seemed quite happy, and we parted amicably. I never heard anymore about the episode. I suspect he thought it somewhat amusing to be vehemently barred by a couple of guards. As I recall, he had at most one man, his driver, with him. An amazing co-incidence. When 319 Radar arrived, one of the Liberator squadrons of the USAAF at Fenton was the '319th. Heavy Bombardment Squadron.'

4. 8. HEALTH AND HYGIENE.

We had an excellent run with unit health until arriving at Wing H/Q, when AC1 Adams was whisked off to 1 MRS with acute appendicitis, complicated by a heavy cold. He rejoined us at Fenton.

There, the immediate concern, until our beautifully fly-proofed cook-house was completed, was the risk of dysentery. Rumour had it the Fenton squadrons had suffered several outbreaks, some severe enough to reduce flying hours.

The squadrons shared a common tip, a mile or less from us, which received a range of wastes, including kitchen waste. These were dumped, but not buried or burnt. Its hazards were discussed with the U.S. MO, Captain Boyliss.

In establishing our camp, sullage water from kitchen and ablution block was taken to a sealed absorption pit. Later, on Wing recommendation, we switched to open absorption trenches.

Discipline was good, the only blemish being the conviction of one airman for violating his pledge on a 'Green Envelope' (uncensored on the unit) - and outlining his location as near a heavy bomber strip. He got a month in the Area Disciplinary Camp (Pine Creek or Brock's Creek). Moments after the dismissal of an afternoon standown parade, before we were on air, an American work party blew up a bomb nearby and a large jagged piece of metal flew across our Parade Ground. I hurried this evidence down to the U.S. CO and protested strongly about this negligence. They did as they promised.... getting out a proof sheet showing the location of the 'Australian Radar' and forbidding entry into our immediate vicinity.

Such explosions occurred from time to time; when bombing up the Liberators, their armourers occasionally got a fuse cross threaded and couldn't screw it home or safely back it out. They then took it out in the scrub and blew it up.

4. 9. FENTON RAIDS.

In recounting these, I'd urge the author quotes the time of day or night. I'd expect this to be given in the history sheets - it's not always indicated in the summary. The path of the raiders, and other targets bombed, would also be of interest. (This will not be known to the authors of the history sheets, but is given in the RAAF History, ref HIST below.). Some material from HIST may be worth reproducing - enemy tracks on raid of July 6th, page 64, and the RAAF photo of the raiders, page 50.

The enemy 'recco' shot down on 17/8/43 by a Spitfire crashed a few miles away, the increase in engine revs was very audible as he dived into the ground. (There is some conflict here between the history sheet summary- recording a shooting down on 17/8 but none on 20/8 - and HIST page 110 which records nothing on 17/8 but one over Fenton on 20/8.).

On 17/8, I allowed the Fitter DMT to take a load of off-duty airmen to the crash site. They collected souvenir fragments - I received a collar from an engine valve assembly found in a tree!

One night, when an incoming raid on Fenton was close, a flare went up from a hill nearby. Many off-duty staff saw it from the slit trenches. Its trajectory was distinctively different from a dropped flare, in that it rose up before falling. A rough bearing was taken and the incident reported.

An N.C.O. from Army Field Security later visited the station and the hill, but gave us no useful feedback. Ref.3, p.111 mentions the general belief.

(The certainty) . . . that Fifth Columnists were operating unmolested inland . . . Radio signals coming from somewhere between Darwin and Daly Waters were mentioned. . . (Enemy aircraft sometimes dropped flares - e.g. over Hughes. . . HIST p. 109).

Although the Fenton A.A. Battery had a searchlight, I do not recall it ever being used during a raid. I understood they had G.L. Radar. I do not recall any raider being brought down.

In the various raids on Fenton and Long, the nearest bomb to 319 was about a mile away.

4. 10. 'LONG' RAIDS.

The Long strip had just been completed by a RAAF Airfield Construction Squadron, and so rumour had it, was soon to be occupied by a RAAF Liberator Squadron. It was completely unoccupied on both raids, 13/8 and 21/8/43, and was later occupied by 2 U.S. Liberator Squadrons, (HIST, p.214). The raids were both at night, as I recall. One, I think the first, was quite spectacular.

H.E. and incendiaries were dropped together. The incendiaries ignited in flight and the H.E. exploded below them, blowing them upwards again until they peaked and fell again.

I joined an inspection of the Long strip in the morning, and bomb fragments showed the H.E. to be of riveted construction, some fragments carried painted dates in the early 1930's. The incendiary remnants looked like 3" lengths of water pipe.

4. 11. BUSHFIRES.

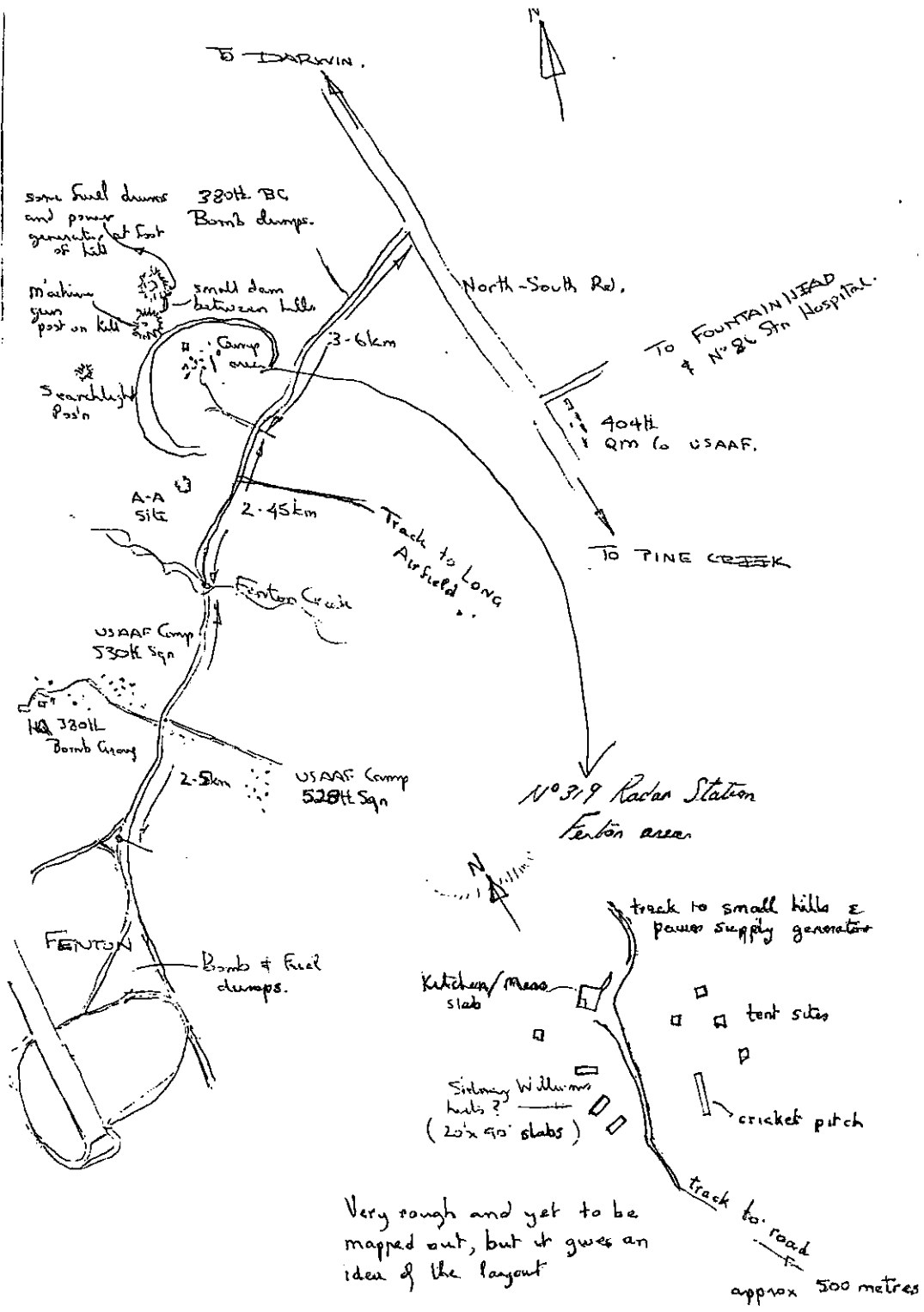
These caused concern in the area on three occasions I can recall. One, on the west of the road, burnt out our phone line to the strip. Another, coming towards the camp in an easterly wind, we defeated by burning back from the eastern boundary of the campsite.

Another, quite remote from the Radar, ignited the edge of a fuel dump at the strip. An American serviceman got a Purple Heart for running a 'dozer' through the dump to separate drums afire around the edge from the main body of the dump.

I never heard any suspicions voiced at the time, but in retrospect one wonders if any were deliberately lit.

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V2 Air War Against Japan. Odgers.
- HALL A Saga of Achievement. The RAAF Radio Story
Hall. Bonall Pub. Radar p. 195
- Australia's Darkest Hour. Timothy Hall. Pub. Methuen, Aust
- Radio and Hobbies in Australia. Photos, illustrations and circuits.
LWAW. Nov 45, July, 45, Feb, April, May, 46.
- Australian Womens Weekly, Dec 25th. 43.
Sketches and paintings of Libs and Yanke at Fenton.
- Souvenir Card. 'Ye Olde Farewell Doo, 44 Wing. 19/8/44.



Very rough and yet to be mapped out, but it gives an idea of the layout

approx 500 metres

RECOLLECTIONS OF 319 Radar.

Don Hibbins,
C.O. 319,
14/9/43 - 12/12/43.

1. There were frequent enemy air raids on the American air base at Fenton during my brief stay at 319. These were mostly around the full moon period. The Japanese accuracy was not always good because, judging by the severity of the bomb blasts, many of them were very much closer to 319 than the air base!
2. On one occasion, near full moon, we were tracking what we believed were enemy aircraft heading towards Fenton from perhaps 100 miles away, and as was routine, the plots were passed to Filter Sector, and we requested identification, but received no reply. When the track was within about 20 miles of us, I rang the C.O. of the air base and asked him if he had received advice that a raid was approaching. He replied that he had received no such advice, so I told him that, although it was not officially confirmed, I believed a raid was imminent. He thanked me and quickly rang off. Within 5 minutes or so, bombs were dropping on the base; and we later learned that part of the Officers' Mess had been damaged. After that, whenever we needed help with repairs to our Ford 10 power plant (which was frequently) it was readily forthcoming.
3. It was usual for the American Liberator bombers to take off in the evening, and we always tracked them about as far as the coast heading in the direction of Timor. For obvious reasons, Filter Sector always requested early in the piece that we cease reporting the plots. On one occasion (presumably during severe temperature inversion conditions) we continued plotting them practically all the way to Timor (more than 450 miles away) and back. The 'blip' of course disappeared off the right hand end of the radar screen and later, after having cleared the permanent ground echoes, re-emerged on the left hand side of the screen.

From Fred Castelli.

Unit 8
36 Banks Street
MONTEREY 2217
10th. May, 1991

Wal Cornish phoned recently and gave me your name and address to write you re 'Radar Stations' during the war years.

I commenced RAAF training at Richmond Base NSW on 19.6.41 about five months after a compulsory call-up Army Camp. Not being suitable for Air Crew, I was mustered for Orderly Room clerical type. After postings to 2 SFTS Wagga, 3 BAGS West Sale, the 1 CR Marrangaroo, I was posted to 308 Radar Stn on 10.12.42, with instructions to report to Eastern Area HQ for further information - to report to Mascot Airport Camp where 307, 308, and 309 Radar Stns were forming up.

F/O Charles Hammer was my CO, and we were kitted out with tropical gear. On 31.12.42 we were all transported by double-decker buses to a wharf and boarded an American Liberty ship, 'JAMES RUSSEL LOWELL,' then duly proceeded up harbour, through the Heads and sailed north with Naval escort, HMAS INVERELL. We had overnight stops at Townsville, and Thursday Island, and arrived Darwin Harbour 12.1.43. Stayed on board that night, and went ashore next morning when 308 Radar personnel were transported to the '11 mile' site where we made camp. Where 307 and 309 went I'm not sure.

We moved from 11 mile early morning on 13.3.43 to Batchelor, and on 1.4.43 stowed our gear into Hudson bomber aircraft for a pleasant 2 hour flight to Millingimbi Is - 59 OBU site. After a couple of Jap air raids, the Radar gear was hauled up on to a wooden tower that had been erected for better and earlier warning. Plenty of mosquitos, sand flies, and I have never before or since seen so many snakes and 3 ft. goannas which didn't seem to bother us - amazing what man can co-habitate with.

Millingimbi was quite enjoyable. We could swim at the beach, in front of the Yirrkala Mission when the tide was in. Two or three of us mated up and we got to know Kolinio, a likeable Fijian in charge of the Mission, who shared many delicious mangoes with us.

Then on 17.1.44 I was posted to 319 Radar, but I didn't leave Millingimbi till 29.1.44 - flew to Batchelor and staged at 44 Radar Wing overnight - then went to Fenton Camp 30.1.44 till 1.4.44; F/Lt Lysaght was C.O.

Fenton Camp was 'Rest and Recreation' after 12 months up north, We were adjacent to an American Liberator Bomber Group and enjoyed their picture nights and concert parties.

On 1.4.44 I went back to Radar Wing till 4.4.44, when we flew from Batchelor to Drysdale (58 OBU) and 319 Radar.

Wal told me he was at Truscott, and we were trying to work out the locations of Truscott and Drysdale. I have seen the Mission at Drysdale referred to as 'Kalumburu' in a 'Wings' article. I walked to the Mission building, one Sunday (Stand-down) - it seemed deserted, having quite extensive bomb damage from an earlier air raid.

On 23, 24 and 25th. May 44 I was busy typing a Summary of Evidence for a Field General Court Martial hearing on 27.6.44 - can't remember who was up before the court.

On a West Australian map, the Drysdale and King Edward Rivers flow into the sea not far apart. I can't recall where the 319 Radar Doover was situated, or the name of the C.O. I think the C.O. of the OBU was F/Lt Askew.

However, I have probably rambled on enough, and if you were up in that area you may know more than I, that would jog the memory.

Looking forward to hear from you.....

Fred Castelli.
ex RAAF 37420 W/O.

PS. On 10.7.44 I departed Drysdale OBU for Radar Wing for clearance and posting [redacted]. We took off from RAAF Darwin early morning 11.7.44.

319 RADAR, FENTON AND DRYSDALE.

(From Fred Castelli, Sgt. Clerk, 319, Apl. to July 1944)

O.K. - you want more info on Fenton and Drysdale... Brother, are you taxing the grey matter.

In my first letter, I mentioned Fenton seemed like a 'R.&R.' camp. I remember F/O C. Lysaght the C.O. (a lawyer in civil life) and the tin hut which was the Orderly Room. I would proceed to the Orderly Room after breakfast in the Mess. The Mess was for the Officer and Sergeants. The C.O. would come in later, put his feet up on the desk and read a book. When the time came round to 11.50, he would suggest we went to the Mess for a pre-lunch drink. The drinks were kept in a sort of insulated tin trunk. The American Officers would come to the Mess sometimes of an evening for refreshments with the C.O. and sometimes the C.O. was invited to the American Officers' Club. The American Liberator Bomber Group was only a short distance down the road. I don't recall the location of the Radar gear.

Fenton had a few air-raids, before I arrived at the camp.. I notice by the 319 History extracts.

I can recall being awoken at 1 or 2 o'clock most mornings by the Liberators going out on a bash to some Jap target. And I remember a couple of visits to the American Hospital to see the C.O. That 'heat exhaustion' was most unpleasant.

My brother Norman was in Army Service Corps up north, and I was pleased to see him at Fenton, when he brought our bread supply a couple of times. Each Thursday, I did a run with the Transport Driver to pick up the Canteen supplies and call in at Radar Wing.

I remember F/O Williams at Fenton with 31 Radar after 319 departed for Drysdale on 25th. March, 1944. I left Fenton on 1st April to Radar Wing, where I remained in the Orderly Room till 4th. April, when I departed after lunch and flew from Batchelor to Drysdale O.B.U. Flying over the water on the way, we reckoned an American ship was popping at us with their ack-ack, with no effect luckily. Maybe they were having practice.

As for Drysdale...the O.B.U. camp, where our tents were, was not far from the strip and not far from the river - apparently the King Edward River. The Duty Pilot's platform was only 5 or 6 feet off the ground where he flashed the Aldis Lamp at departing aircraft. I remember one of the noisy Mitchell bombers taking off a few times. And as I mentioned before, it was not a great distance to walk to the Mission building that had been hit previously by the Japs.

As for the water supply - it was probably pumped up from the river. The C.O. of the O.B.U. from memory was F/Lt. Askew, engineer type I think. I can't visualise the ablutions, Mess or Canteen, and can't remember doing any fishing. Referring to my own diary - we had a concert after Mess on 26th. April 1944, a beer issue on Sat. 29th. April. Another concert on 11th. May. Sunday 21st May we played cricket. Back to 18th. April... we had a visit by C.A.S. (not mentioned in your history.) The C.A.S. also visited the O.B.U. camp at Millingimbi when I was there on 9th. Aug 1943, accompanied by the then Governor General.

Then as I told you in my previous letter, I was busy for 3 days - 23rd, 24th., 25th. May 1944 typing the Summary of Evidence for Field Gen. Court Martial held on 27th. June, as recorded in the 319 history. And from 319 Ops. Record, I see it was LAC Reid, radar mechanic, who was up on the Court Martial.

Sunday 2nd. July another concert. Tues. 4th. July I moved the Orderly Room - I don't know where. Fri. 7th. July I think it was the O.B.U. W/O put on a Farewell Party in the Mess for my posting south, having completed my Tropical Duty.

Monday, 10th. July 1944 I departed Drysdale and arrived at Radar Wing H.Q. 15.30 hours for clearance on posting south, and departed RAAF Darwin 11th. July 0600 hours. (A.N.A. aircraft, civvy captain with RAAF Sgt. co-pilot.)

Sorry my recollections of Drysdale are not more explicit. I will be meeting with Charles Hammer in a couple of weeks (ex C.C. 308 Radar) Maybe he will be able to jog my memory some more.

Cheers and all the best.

Fred Castelli.

P.S. I am enjoying the Memories. Will write you again in a couple of weeks.

Fred.

12th Nov Mail arriving quite frequently now by air at new strip. Mainly DC-3 landing. Posted to 219 Radar Station at Fenton awaiting transport.

21st Nov. Left 2121 by truck 0530 today to return to Wing on way to Fenton road very rough & hills steep only 4 wheel drive trucks able to go through and so we say farewell to 2121, with the Yukalla Kechodien Mission nearby, all the things of which Kechodien is chief, and to the beautiful beach's & spots. During stay out there Bird

was literally transformed Strip being built & roads everywhere.

Left strip per Harkell "Yard Bird" Dec. 3. 7:30 AM. arrived Batchelor after uneventful trip 10 AM. arrived Wang for lunch, saw George Dixon 22nd Nov. moved to Fenton with Ker. Bird. Good camp - 2 bottles beer for 1 carton cigarettes. 22nd March 1964. Spent all this time at Fenton good meals & conditions in general. Dr. Jaffer with me. Ker. Bird & Ker Carter posted to 207.

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24th March - Station received

many orders - worked all night - record move. - Norm Gillis, Peter Martin Doc & I left behind and moved to Wang on 21st. - terrible place may be moving back to 119 at new location.

25th March: - Posted to Wang doing clerical work in Ground Office with Frank Bishop.

6th April: - Still at Wang doing guard duty now, shift work again, but escape daily PT.

20th April: - back again with Frank Bishop not

bad.

Harkell in Darwin from Alaska. Has search reported killed while over Germany.

22nd May: - Posted from 44 Radar Wing to 54 Radar Station at Pt. Very good camp, excellent. Blackie for swimming. 3 March shows a week plus double featured K.E. show at ⁵⁴ Harkell's camp.

Better gear to work on, hope to stay here for 3-4 months. 6th June: - just one year since I left Sydney no sign of leave for at least 6-8 months - had show. A few Recco's have been over

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R 11/3/94

HISTORY NOTES of R.A.A.F. SERVICE

Page 1.

Source; Personal Diaries 1943 & 44.

RALPH WILLIAM SIERAKOWSKI L.A.C. No.125750.

Age 26. Enlisted 31/12/1942. Discharged 24/9/1945.

Mustering Radar Operator, Group 2.

Special Course No.64 R.D.F. Richmond, NSW. 7/3/43.

Qualified for Returned from Active Service Badge,

Pacific Star & 1939/45 Star Ribbons, etc.

Resumed Civilian Occupation as Hotelier, Oct. 1945.

1943.

December 30th. Thursday. Arrived Fenton Field, late afternoon.
Settled-in quickly- big camp- U.S. Liberators everywhere with U.S. Airman, good facilities.
Friday. On shift after tea. 9.30p.m. to Midnight.
similar equip to 317.

1944.

January 2nd. Sunday. Strengthened Tent, re-inforced Bed, Movie 'Eagle Sqdn
8th. Saturday John Wayne & Troup visit for Concert
18th. Tuesday Cricket match against RAAF Sigs Unit.
Plenty of mail, beer & Cigs.
22nd. Saturday Col Vaughan called in for visit.
27th. Thursday Met Ralph Knowles again at RAAF Sigs unit.
February 3rd. Thursday Went to 44 RDF Wing for day, saw F/Lt Chilton.
10th Thursday Went to 44 RDF Wing again.
14th. Monday Went to N.W. Area to audition for RAAF Mobile Entertainment Unit. no luck.
Routine work, Doover O.K., Howard Motors good.
March 3rd. Friday. Rang Home for first time, Maureen Speechless ??
17th. Friday. Rang Home again- marvellous talk with Maureen.
Rarely see our C.O. F/O Lysaght, a sick man.
24th. Friday. 'Doover' closed down at 8p.m. worked all night dismantling equip. (3 spells for hot tea breaks
25th. Saturday 9 am. left Fenton Field aboard 4 Transport Planes
US C47's for Drysdale again-- arrived 11.15 am.
Work of erection started after lunch-- till Midnight
26th. Sunday. 5p.m. 'Doover' going again. We are located near the 58 OBU camp site. The old Station 317 has been shifted out to Sir Graham Moore Island from Pago Pago.

319 RADAR.

*meanwhile: 317 Shipped from Pago Pago to
59.M. on 9/14/44*

1944.

- April 1st. Calibration flights continued over several days.
3 'Reccos' picked-up, few plots-- well out to sea.
Renewed acquaintance with Fr.Seraphim Sanz.
11th. Easter Tuesday. F/O. W.Hammer arrived as new C.O.
14th. Friday. F/O Norman Leahy arrived twice by Douglas C 47.
18th. Tuesday. Air Vice Marshall Jones pays us a visit (great guy)
27th. Thursday Went Fishing & shooting 2 days at Mission Bay.
- May. 3rd. 'Lightening' carried out photo activity,
F/O Oakes is back with us. Regular 'Dog-watch' Duties.
26th. Friday Jap 'Recco' tracked 70 miles out Contact with 105 FCU.
- June. 17th. Saturday. Spent day at the Mission, Fr, Sanz invited me to be
'Godfather' to Keith Smith from OBU Sigs. unit.
(a School-teacher from Sydney) a big surprise to me
We used to debate occasionally as unit entertainment
between respective tent-personnel, Radar-V's- Sigs.
Sunday .Cricket Match with OBU.
- July. 10th. Monday. F/O. Oakes & F/Sgt Castelli posted 44 R.Wing.
Proposal to move 319 to Anjo Peninsula 'Truscott'.
15th. Saturday. Big Sing Sing. issue of 2 Bottles/beer
Dr. Musso gave talk.
20th. Thursday. New Moon. 'Recco' plotted (16 plots), approached
from rear, inland-- intercepted by our Spitfires,
1 Jap 'Dinah' shot down. Obtained small piece
of fuselage as memento eventually.
28th. Friday. Mr. Chiltern of Wing arrived with other Officers.
29/30th Sat/Sun. 'Doover' dismantled, with gear & Tents, awaiting
transport to Mission Bay (Pago) for transfer by
Barge across to Anjo.
- August 1st. Tuesday. Wading out to Barge, left Mission Bay at 10.30am.
arriving Anjo. Pens. at 2pm. Spent evening with
No.154 Radar Group. Saw Jap. Plane wreckage.
2nd. Wednesday. Unloaded Barge in morning & erecting 'Doover' pm.
15 Mitchell Bombers flew over (Dutch Sqdn. ??)
5th. Saturday. 'Doover' operational again, set-up Tent new site.
6th. Sunday. Regular shift-work recommenced, plenty activity.
7th. Monday. Special Concert by 14 Mobile Unit (I.A.C.S.)
8th. Tuesday. Movies.. 'The Sky's the Limit' Fred Astaire.
23rd. Wednesday Big Concert at O.B.
31st. Thursday Posted to Group 40, at Bathurst Island.
Rostered on last shift with 319.
Went fishing and got among the Oysters.
- September 4th. Monday Did all my washing & finished Packing.
5th. Tuesday. Left Truscott at 7am. arrived Darwin RAAF. 9.30am.
sent to 105 F/S put in POOL Group.
Posting to Bathurst Is. scrubbed.
10th. Sunday. Visited 5 RIMU & hitch-hiked over 100 miles
to Darwin.
12th. Tuesday Posted to No.1 Stores Depot. in Melb.
left by Cattle Trucks ?? with other Personnel
for Adelaide River, Alice Springs & train to Adelaide.
15th. Friday. Arrival in Melbourne & week-end leave.
1944. 15th. Friday. Arrival in Melbourne & week-end leave.
September 18th. Monday. Report to No.1 Stores Depot at Port Melbourne.

319 RADAR.....DRYSDALE.

(Charles Hammer, C.O. 319 11.4.44 - 1.8.44)

Unfortunately, I have no vivid recall of Personnel 'on strength' during the period when I was C.O. of 319, However, I plan to contact Fred Castelli who was Clerk General of RS 308 and RS 319 and others for details as to how they happened to be present at Drysdale at this time.

Drysdale was an Operational Base Unit with Air Defence facilities with a permanent Air Force General Duties Officer (S/L. Armstrong) in charge of aircraft movements and control. The base had on strength Cypher, Intelligence, Signals, Adjutant, Stores etc officers, and was supported by a teletype unit.

The airfield was eighteen miles inland from the old 'Pago' Mission at the mouth of the Drysdale Mission and adjacent to the King Edward River and new Mission 'Kalumburu.' (see newspaper article attached and prepared by Frank Clune and published in the Sydney Daily Mirror October 31st 1945.) The Mission was manned by a number of Spanish Missioners (see photograph in article) viz, Dom Rosendo Sosa, Frank Clune in middle, W.C.Hammer at right. The master of the mission schooner or lugger 'Little Flower' (Dom Seraphim) was extremely proud of his beard and invited all visitors to feel and examine its fine quality and texture which he likened to fine silk.

The following items may be of interest:-

1. Sir Graham Moore Island - World War 1 Soldiers' Settlement was the site of RS 317 (Harry Freeman T.O.) and American LORAN master control station for navigational aid. Slave stations were located at Champagny and Bathurst Islands. (This installation was taken over by RAAF in 1945) The Americans used a distillation plant for water.
2. The Personnel of RS 319 from memory were drawn from Gove, Millingimbi and as you have indicated from Fenton. It is of interest to note that RS 319 was the only Radar Station in 44 Radar Wing to be involved in a Court Martial. A Radar Mechanic named Reid (his father was a well known journalist in Melbourne) elected to be tried by Court Martial after he had been charged by F/O Oakes for writing the following statement in the Station Log:- 'As usual, I had the privilege of cleaning up the mess left by F/O Oakes after he had experimented on the equipment during the period allotted for Maintenance.'
- Discussion between the Padre, myself and others could not persuade Mr. Reid from being tried by Court Martial which in due course took place. S/L Armstrong was nominated 'Airman's Friend,' and other legal types arrived from Area Headquarters to hear the evidence presented. Ultimately proved that the statement in the Log book was not consistent with 'good order and conduct of an airman.'
- Mr. Reid felt justice had been met and shook hands all round. RS 319 continued to function throughout the hearing.
3. Spitfire Fighter Support - Detachment of No. 1 Fighter Wing. Normally three Spitfires were stationed at Drysdale. During a period when a detachment of the English Squadron was present or in attendance, Willie Winchester, a pilot who hailed from Derbyshire U.K. was overjoyed on one occasion to receive a dinner of roast beef, baked potatoes etc by the courtesy of the Missioners who every time they killed a beast would remember RAAF Radar 319. We in turn would give them a four gallon drum of 'Dry Barm' to make bread. It was always hazardous to visit the Missioners as they were overwhelming in their hospitality, and would press on their visitors schooners of altar wine, and when it came time to leave their

Sanctum, the ground would seem to quake under the visitors' feet. This situation would produce may peals of laughter from the Missioners. Drinking large quantities of wine was a normal custom to them - not so the visitors.

4. Jolliffe - Cartoonist and Camoufleur. Jolliffe, like many artists, was seconded during the war years for the purpose of advising on camouflage and means of deceiving enemy observation of war equipment etc. Jolliffe arrived at Drysdale Mission in 1944 en route to Anjo Peninsula and Truscott site then in course of construction. The missioners arranged for him to travel overland on foot with a number of aborigines. When Jolliffe returned, he reported a hair raising experience in that he had to run most of the way or be left behind in a lost situation. The aborigines wanted to reach Anjo Peninsula before nightfall, and to traverse 28 miles they had to move at a speed commensurate with the distance. A similar situation to this happened after World War 1 when the survey ship 'GERANIUM' put a party ashore at Drysdale to instal a number of bench marks and they lost one of their members. They searched for about six weeks and couldn't find him, and after completing a survey of the North West coastline, they returned again to further their search. They found his remains and established they had been within six feet of the victim when they had previously conducted their search.

5. Curlews, Dingoes, Bronzewing Pigeons, Camp-life, etc. Much has been written about the fierce dingo which it is claimed took a babe.

I have lain on my camp stretcher in my tent with a mosquito net over my camp stretcher and viewed curlews and dingoes passing through at 2 a.m.. Not the slightest interest in human beings. The thing about curlews is that they move about in odd numbers.

6. MacRobertson's International Air Race, 1930's.

Two German competitors found themselves stranded on the North Western Australian coastline in the vicinity of Drysdale Mission. Aborigines reported their presence to the Missioners who through their knowledge of the area and help of the aborigines were able to rescue them. The Australian German Ambassador in recognition of the service rendered made a present of an organ which was installed in the Mission chapel.

It is ironic that on 27th. September, 1943, the Japanese as Allies of the Germans saw fit to bomb the Mission and destroy the organ and kill the Missioner responsible for saving the lives of the German aviators in the 1930's.

7. Chance meeting with Ernie Collibee, pilot of DC3 and Biscuit Bomber.

Prior to the World War 2, I worked with broadcasting station 2UW as a Technician, and knew of Ernie Collibee, an announcer and salesman who flew a twin engine aircraft on behalf of the McWilliams Wines and provided a shark patrol of surfing beaches north and south of Sydney, from Newcastle to Wollongong. Anyway, he later joined the RAAF and distributed provisions and supplies in Australia and New Guinea; and it is strange that he visited Drysdale in 1944 and parked his DC3 aircraft near RS 319, which was located near one of the runways. When he got back to Sydney, he said that he had landed at the end of the earth, and who should walk out of the bush and greet him, none other than Charles Hammer. This incident was reported in the 2UW news bulletin at the time.

8. Beaufort Bomber Movements. Beaufort bombing crews with targets over Flores and Penfoe used to arrive during the afternoon prior to the task and bed down overnight and depart at 3 A.M. the following morning. Japanese gun laying stations at these points were very accurate, and would often shoot these Beauforts out of the formation.

They flew at 15000 feet, and normally 15 aircraft to a flight. We also had PRU Aircraft flying out of Drysdale. These were aircraft of the following types: Brewster Buffalo; PM38 (Black Widow or Lightning) Mosquito; all stripped of armaments and unwanted equipment. They normally only carried cameras and pilot. Johnny Rush, a Canadian pilot in a PM38 flying at 20000 feet over Flores was shocked on one occasion to view flack exploding 200 feet below him. He promptly closed his hangar door and returned to base with the hope he could fly another day - which he did the following day.

9. Visit to Truscott site. During this time I received a visit from S/L Rex Wadsley en route to choose a site on Anjo Peninsula for RS 319 or RS 154. He requested that I accompany him which I did. We travelled by launch from memory; prior arrangements being made by radio. Rex Wadsley during peacetime was an engineer with the Hydro Electric Commission, Tasmania, and had been on course with me at Richmond, October 1947.

He used to have nightmares, and on one occasion about 2 a.m. in the morning, he started shouting 'They have got me - They have got me!' I promptly woke him and said 'Who has got you?' He replied 'The monkeys with the purple tails!' I don't know what he was dreaming about. Anyway, he was the fellow I went with to Anjo Peninsula to locate a Radar and Camp site, and from memory, it was east of the prepared runway. The CO of Truscott at the time was a red headed fellow, and he seemed very happy to have visitors and people to chat with over the tea cup. I looked at some Radar equipment, and seem to recall it used a rotary spark system and was much more powerful than LW/AW equipment. It could have been the 154 station for that matter which I understand was GCI. I seem to recall that we later moved RS 319 from Drysdale to Truscott by LST from the outlet of the Drysdale River. I remember being ill after eating water melon recovered from the Mission garden.

10 Drysdale Runway and King Edward River. The campsite of RS 319 was between the runway and the King Edward River. Members of the station used to swim in the river, and I remember on one occasion viewing a giant cod without a head, its body was the size of a four gallon drum, and the cod had apparently been attacked by a crocodile which were plentiful, and at night lay across horse pads. The water of the river was about 20 feet down from the bank which was a rock formation of what variety I am unable to recall. Also adjacent to this airfield was a new Mitchell bomber which had developed a fault, and had been left as a disposable item. It seemed recognized practice of Americans and Dutch Colonials to dump U/S equipment at any convenient place.

11. Camp life at night. The recreation room, constructed of swamp oak and black corrugated iron roof often produced atmospheric noises which in the quiet of the night would suggest that rain was falling on the roof. Not the case, however. It was the noise effect produced by termites busily eating away the walls of the building i.e. the swamp oak.

Concert nights and community singing brought people together for a common purpose and good fellowship. We had a good musician who could play the piano accordion (I can't think of his name) and was willing to play hymns in support of all denominations, popular songs etc. The Technical Officer also played the piano and covered a range of songs for community singing. The stage for all artists was the back of a 30 cwt truck.

Speaking of these occasions, I am conscious that the station had a canteen which was in a 'state of limbo' due to some accounting problem at a previous location (shortage of funds or goods) This matter had been resolved with Area Finance Office and credit restored. It was agreed that due to the impending move of the station from Drysdale to Anjo Peninsula that the Canteen should not have stock replenished

until the camp was re-established at the new site.

Note: The A.B.C. in a Documentary, 'The Bush Tuckerman' recently showed aerial shots of Anjo Peninsula and Truscott airstrip in colour. There could be some material of interest in this documentary.

12. RAAF Personnel Occurrence Report, RS319. The Personnel of Radar Stations, their movements, hospitalization, posting, number, rank, trade and group, name, also promotion appeared in the case of the North Western Area in the Personnel Occurrence Report promulgated by S/L C.C. Degenhart, commanding No. 2 Base Personnel Staff Office.

The Personnel Occurrence Report for RS 319 during 1943/44 maybe on record in the Archives of the Department of Defence.

It seems at this juncture I should take time off, and continue at a later date. In so doing, I will endeavour to contact Fred Castelli who to date has not answered his phone. I will forward any additional information on Personnel etc. as it comes to hand.

Charles Hammer.

319 RADAR STATION.

Formed on 12.4.43, at	Mascot, N.S.W.
6.6.43,	Fenton, N.T.
30.3.44,	Drysdale, W.A.
1.8.44,	Anjo,
	(Truscott) W.A.
	by Air to Darwin.
Disbanded	29.8.45
	9.10.45.

o o o o

12th April, 1943. 319 RDF Station formed at Mascot - P/O. J.H.Reen
MASCOT arrived as C.O. to find 13 airmen already assembled. The unit
began to come together with the arrival of the Stores Clerk
and stores. Dental and Medical examinations carried out.

16th. 4 W.T. Operators arrived from Signals School.

23rd. Consignment of ammunition arrived for 319, 320, and 321 stations.

26th.-28th. 10 Trainee RDF Operators arrived.

30th. Strength of Unit - 1 Officer, 1 Cpl., 27 AC's.

4th. May. Signal QX489 advising station to be ready to move by 10th.
P/O Reen recalled from leave.

8th. Personnel equipped with Tropical gear.

10th. 10 Guards arrived.

15th. Ford Motor Transport 203864 collected from 2SD. Technical
equipment transported direct from 1 RIMU to rail terminal.
All other equipment transported to Alexandria Goods Yards
by 319 Personnel.

18th. Personnel left Sydney Central by special troop train, and
proceeded to Adelaide via Melbourne, arriving 0915 on
20th. May. Staged at Wayville Showgrounds.

21st. Proceeded to Terowie by rail. Change to narrow gauge.

22nd. Enjoyed mid-day meal at Quorn, supplied by Quorn CWA.
All other meals on train to Alice Springs were dry rations,
arriving 24th. May.

25th. Left Alice Springs by motor transport, arriving Adelaide
River staging camp 30th. - then to 44 RDF Wing.

31st. Personnel enjoyed a rest day.
Unit Strength - 1 Officer, 1 Corporal, 43 AC's.

5th. June. Personnel and equipment departed from 44 RDF Wing and trans-
FENTON ported to station site at FENTON, by M/T Convoy of 4 vehicles.
Second consignment arrived next day.

7th. Temporary Mess and cockhouse erected. Uncrating and assembly
of gear commenced.

8th.-22nd. Sites for Cps. Room, Powerhouse, Mechs Tent prepared and phones
etc. installed, also WT equipment and RDF equipment.

12th. No. 1 power unit started up

14th. No. 2 power unit started up

22nd. RDF gear operating, but difficulty experienced in contacting
10 Mobile Fighter Sector.

23rd. Station Operational. No. 1 power unit giving trouble - U/S

28th. Enemy aircraft raided Darwin. Tracked by 319 RDF station at
range of 80 miles, and tracked out to 130 miles.

30th. 21 enemy aircraft raided FENTON FIELD, detected at range of
72 miles. Raiding force tracked out to 98 miles.
Power unit defective for second time.
Strength - 1 Officer, 2 Corporals, 35 AC's.

6th. July. 22 enemy aircraft raid FENTON FIELD, detected at 116 miles -
lost contact at 86 miles.

7th. Men from 3MWS commenced erection of barracks building.

319 Radar Station, (2)

- 1943
- 12th. July. Connecting rod on Ford MT broke. Unit replaced
- 16th. Permanent buildings completed - Men's Mess, Sergeants' and Officers' Mess, Kitchen, Store, ablutions and latrines. No. 2 Power Unit again U/S.
- 18th. Severe bushfire approached the camp, but firebreaks and 'burnback' protected it.
- 22nd. American Bomb Disposal Squad exploded bomb at rear of camp site. CO 319 interviewed Major Williams and Lieut. Henderson of the 43rd Squadron concerning Bomb disposal. Directive issued forbidding American personnel to enter RAAF Prohibited Area for bomb disposal or similar.
- 27th. Both power units developed trouble because of poor fuel. No power for about 40 minutes.
- 29th. Commenced compass and chain survey to determine exact station location.
- 31st. An anti-blast wall constructed around the power units. Strength. 1 Officer, 2 corporals, 35 A/C's Guard. 1 corporal, 6 A/C's
- 3rd. August. No. 2 power unit dismantled for repairs. Boring party from 1 MWS arrived at camp with boring equipment.
- 5th. No.2 alternator re-assembled.
- 8th. Anti-blast wall of fuel drums planned to protect the technical site.
- 10th. Motor No. 2 de-carbonised.
- 12th. F/O Page from 11 Survey and Design to attempt to supply galvanised iron sheeting for power unit shelter.
- 13th. Enemy raiding force detected at 90 miles. Raid tracked in and heard overhead. Second enemy force detected at 62 miles NNW. Tracked to 18 miles, then the force turned north. First force dropped bombs over GILL and LONG flight strips. Negligible damage.
- 17th. Enemy aircraft tracked overhead at great height, pursued by 2 Spitfires. Gunfire heard. Enemy aircraft crashed. Signal received from RDF Wing congratulating all stations.
- 19th. F/L Hodges, Area Welfare Officer, suggested the construction of a separate Recreation Hut.
- 21st. 3 enemy raiding forces were detected, at 108 miles, 84 miles, and 96 miles. GILL and LONG were bombed. Enemy aircraft were heard overhead, and FENTON strip was bombed. Difficulty experienced establishing communications 51 plots were passed before WT contact was lost - 42 plots subsequently.
- 25th. No.1 power unit dismantled.
- 26th. P/O McDougall temporarily in charge. P/O Reen posted to 46 RDF.
- 28th. No 2 power unit dismantled.
- 7th. Sept. Enemy aircraft picked up at 103 miles, tracked in to 59 miles; tracked out to 97 miles.
- 10th. F/O Richards took over as Temporary CO.
- 11th. Calibration flights carried out.
- 14th. F/O Hibbins took over as CO 319 RDF.
- 15th. Night raid on FENTON - picked up plots at 83 miles.
- 19th. Night raid - picked up plots at 85 miles.
- 20th. Commenced building new Plotting Room.
- 3rd. Oct. Cricket match between 319 and Radar Wing. Scores; 319 RS 174: Wing 130.
- 10th. New Plotting Room completed.

319 Radar Station, (3)

FENTON.

- 22nd. Oct. Commenced building new engine house.
31st. Strength: 1 Officer, 1 Sgt. 5 Corporals, 15 LAC's, 12 AC's.
- 7th. Nov. First match in Middle Zone cricket competition played.
9th. F/L. Chilton and F/O. Hill inspected the station.
12th. RAAF Signals cricket team visited the station for match.
20th. New engine house completed. New Orderly Room and store commenced.
- 26-27th. Interrogator Responzor installed by Sgt. Kelly from WING.
28th. Orderly Room and store completed.
- 12th. Dec. F/O P.C.Lysaght took over as CO 319.
19th. Cricket match against No. 1 MWS ended in a draw.
25th. Christmas Day. The men enjoyed a Special Dinner provided from Welfare Funds.
- 26th. Cricket Match against Army Repair Unit abandoned because of rain.
- 30th. Unit Welfare is good. Unit has its own cricket pitch, and a match is played every Sunday. Pictures available almost every night, and there are first class entertainers in the unit.
During the month the performance of Radar equipment has been excellent. A new Howard motor was installed, and no further motor trouble experienced. The average daily maximum range was 84 miles. Mk 111 IFF Interrogator Responzor installed, but so far results have been nil.
1944.
3rd. Jan. Area PMO G/C. Farrar inspected the camp.
13th. P/O. Blair altered installation of Interrogator Responzor and carried out successful tests.
- 24th. Padre Beckett conducted service in Recreation Hut.
Report on LW/AW Mk. 1.
There was very satisfactory operation of the gear for the month. Time Off Air due to minor faults was 29 minutes. Typical maximum ranges were 98-101 miles. S/N Ratio 1:1 Estimated height around 10000 feet. T/I was prevalent during the month. Also electrical storms and wet stormy days towards end of month.
Satisfactory operation of W/T Gear and main power supplies.
Strength, 1 Officer, 29 O/R's.
- 4th. Feb. F/Lt. Chilton, CO 44 Radar Wing, and F/Lt. Clarke, MO, inspected the camp. Site selected for 31 RS array.
10th. F/O. Williams arrived with gear to install 31 RS array.
18th. A very successful concert was held in the Rec Room.
22nd. P/O Blair arrived to adjust the Interrogator Responzor. This is now operating satisfactorily.
29th. Very satisfactory operation of the gear during the month. Max. ranges up to 100 miles.
Strength. 1 Officer, 30 O/R's.
- 12th. March. G/C. Chamberlain, Dir. of Radio Services, inspected the station and camp. W/C Blakely and F/O Bullen in attendance.
22nd. F/O Lysaght, CO 319. admitted to 86th. US Army Hospital suffering from heat exhaustion. F/O H.J.Williams took over temporary command.
23rd. F/O Oakes took over temporary command.
24th. Instructions received at 1945 hours to dismantle LW/AW Radar gear for transport by aircraft the next morning. Work commenced immediately.

319 Radar Station, (4)

- 25th, March, 1944. At 0100 hours F/O Henderson-Wilson arrived from 44 Radar Wing to take charge of movement of station. At 0530 hours all Radar equipment, power supplies and barracks equipment on waggons ready for despatch to FENTON strip. S/L R.R.Chilton CO 44 Radar Wing arrived to supervise despatch of the station. At 0830 hours F/O Henderson-Wilson, F/O Oakes, 15 airmen and all equipment on board 4 American Transport Corps C47 aircraft at FENTON Strip. Aircraft took off for DRYSDALE at 0919 hours. F/O H.J. Williams in temporary command of the remaining detachment of 12 airmen.
- 26th. F/O Lysaght discharged from 86th. US Army hospital and resumed command of the remaining detachment.
- 30th. C.O. and remaining 12 airmen depart, leaving Fenton Radar Site to 31 Radar Station.
- DRYSDALE
1st. April S/L Chilton, CO 44 Radar Wing and F/L Clarke, MO, visited the unit.
- 11th. F/O W.C.Hammer arrived and assumed command of 319 RS
30th. Strength 2 Officers, 20 OR's.
- 3rd. May. Lightning carried out photo reconnaissance. IFF checked and tested prior to departure.
- 6th. F/O Oakes assumed temporary command when F/O Hammer admitted to SSQ 14 MWS Truscott.
- 8th. Hudson A16-138 from Drysdale carried out calibration tests.
10th. 1 C47 and 40 Spitfires plotted in and out.
11th. F/O Hammer discharged from SSQ 14 MWS
13th. F/O Hammer resumed as CO 319 Radar.
15th. Lightning IFF checked and tested.
23rd. 1 Spitfire of 3 on sector reconnaissance lost engine revs, and directed to land on Governor Island. ASR Launch ordered to rescue pilot, Sgt. McNeil.
- 26th. Track of possible enemy recce passed to Drysdale.
No sightings by Spitfires.
Strength: 2 Officers. 21 OR's.
- 3rd. June. Station visited by: S/L Burns, CO 2BPSO, F/L Ricketts, CO 8 RAAF Postal Unit.
- 10th. Station visited by: S/L McShane, Air Board Representative, F/L Hollins, 11 Signals.
- 12th. Station visited by: S/L Grout-Smith, Area Radar Officer, F/L Clarke, 44 Radar Wing MO.
- 20th. Church service, F/L Lynden, C of E Padre from Truscott.
27th. Field General Court Martial convened.
28th. F.L Barton, Area Cypher, visited the unit.
Operational Efficiency: Satisfactory.
Strength: 2 Officers, 22 O/R's
- 10th. Sector Control Centre, Drysdale, removed to Anjo. Plots now to 105 FCU.
- 20th. Hostile aircraft plotted at a range 96 miles, 278 degrees. Track held to range of 47 miles where enemy aircraft was intercepted by Spitfires. Track followed across Drysdale (sic) strip to the north where Spitfires intercepted, resulting in 1 Dinah shot down. (Truscott*)
Detachment of Security Guards arrived - 1 Cpl, 4 LAC's and 1 AC1.
- 25th. Captain Cooke, Salvation Army, and RAAF entertainment party visited 319.
- 28th. G/C Chamberlain, Director Radar Services, S/L Grout Smith, Area Radar Officer, S/L Parker, (Co-Pilot) S/L Purdy and F/L Northy inspect the station.
- 30th. Operation 319 at Drysdale concluded, equipment to new site.

319 Radar Station, (5)

ANJO.
1st. Aug. '44 F/L R. Benham 63083 arrived on posting to assume command.
2nd. Move to Anjo completed - Technical site approximately 1 mile west of 154 RS and 154 camp facilities being used.
5th. 1918 hours - 319 Radar became operational at the new site.
10th. Power units despatched to 317 Radar Sir Graham Moore Is.
14th. New Ford 10 power units received from Radar Wing.
29th. F/L Russell, Area Filter Officer, inspected Technical site.

3rd. Sept. Jamming tests carried out from 1400 - 1600 hours. This was preceded by lecture to all operators on jamming technique.
5th. - 18th. Three inspections ; F/O Ramage, Area P and RT Officer, F/O Bowler, Area Transport Officer, and F/L J.B.Hughes, Radar Officer, 105 FCU.
23rd. Calibration tests etc carried out and completed by F/O Eyre, with Hudson A/c flying at heights of 500 ft, 2000 Ft, 6000 ft, and 10000 ft.
14th. Oct. Clearing timber from around transmitter site. Marked increase in Sig noise ratio noticed.
17th. F/Lt Scott, Radar Officer, 105 FCU inspected operations. Marked improvement noted in ranged obtained.
3rd. Nov. Completed clearing timber around operations site with bulldozer.
5th. Further improvement in performance noted.
12th - 14th. Best range, 138 miles; ship plotted at 87 miles.
28th. Capt, Pedersen, Salvation Army, visited unit and held service and quiz session.

December Very quiet month. Maintenance party overhauled the equipment and improved the overall sensitivity.

1945
6th. Jan. Phenomenal range of 192 miles obtained on 2 Catalinas going on patrol. Slight T.I. noticed.
15th. A/C Charlesworth, AOC/NWA inspected unit. Also F/O MacKenzie Filter Officer visited.
20th. Installation of AR7 completed in Ops Room by W/O McLean.
13th. Feb. New Operational procedure effected 1800 hours with disbandment of Filter Room at Truscott. Plots now direct by WT to ADHQ.
18th. G/C Walker, C.O ADHQ inspected all operations and equipment.
27th. 0220 hours. A/C thought to be enemy plotted. Jamming procedure prevented continuous plotting.

1st - 9th. Bad weather conditions - air activity restricted.
23rd. Pre-amplifier removed from equipment, resulting in poorer performance.

1st. - 4th. Poor weather conditions, very few aircraft.
5th. - 8th. Air activity greatly increased.
17th. F/O H.H.Milvain, 71730, posted to command 319 RS
18th. Pre-amplifier fitted to AW Receiver. Results satisfactory.
19th. Abnormal range on Catalina, 134 miles
21st. Ship detected, 350 degrees, 92 miles.
25th. F/O Milvain arrived.

2nd. May. Handover completed- F/O Milvain assumed command.
15th. LW/AW Maintenance party in charge of Sgt Savage arrived en route to 317 RS.
16th. Construction of Unit Rec. Hut commenced.
27th. Successful swimming and sports afternoon held on beach

319 Radar Station (6)

27th. May on Vansittart Bay. About 35 personnel from 154 and
(Cont.) 319 participated.
29th. S/L O'Hara, Area Filter Officer inspected 319.
3rd. June. Maintenance party returned from 317 RS to overhaul the
319 equipment.
14th. 317 and 319 Radars placed on Triatic WT circuit with ADHQ.
15th. New Rec Hut going well and should soon be ready.
17th. Successful cricket match played against 58 OBU.
19th - 26th. F/O Harris Assist Radar Officer ADHQ inspected 154
and 319 Radars. Departed on 23rd. to inspect 317 Radar
24th. Football match, Aussie rules, between 154 and 319.
1st. July. Supply ship from Darwin arrived.
2nd. Warning order concerning forthcoming move was received.
4th. Further orders concerning move were received.
5th. Floor completed in the new Rec. Hut.
8th. AWC Has clear win in cricket match.
10th. Sports field cleared by bulldozer, and new road to OBU
was constructed.
12th. Monthly Radar party in the mess. Farewell to F/L Waldron
and welcome to F/O Beeston, who is taking over 154 Radar.
15th. Defeated OBU by narrow margin in Aussie football.
The Radar team was combined 154 and 319.
22nd. First cricket match of Truscott Competition. The
Radars defeated the AWC.
24th. 319 held a unit party which was great success. A good
haul of fish provided an excellent supper. Celebrating
the birth of the CO's new daughter.
28th. Second cricket match of Truscott competition. Radars
defeated OBU Signals.
29th. Radars won football match against OBU
1st. August. Spitfire pilots visited the Unit.
3rd. Packing cases arrive for Unit move.
5th. Radar team defeated OBU at cricket.
9th. 3 Dakota transports conveyed 344 personnel and equipment
to Darwin.
11th. The Recreation Hut was the venue for unit concert.
15th. Peace declared at 0830. Radar ops ceased at 1430 hours.
16th. Unit party held in Rec. hut.
17th. All day picnic held at Vansittart Bay.
18th. - 24th. Normal Operations resumed from 0900 18th. to 1200 hours
24th. Operations ceased.
25th. Equipment packed ready for air move.
29th. 3 personnel left with first consignment of equipment.
31st. Movement by air to Darwin still continuing.
Strength 1 Officer 24 airmen..

Further note. Before 319 Radar was closed down at Truscott,
a chapel was built and services held. It must be that
the 154/319 Radar camp was the only Radar station to
have built its own Recreation Hut and Chapel.

TRUSCOTT RADAR.

317 RADAR. Early Warning, L.W.A.W.
1.3.43 Mascot
6.4.43 Old Drysdale. (by plane.)
11.4.44 Sir Graham Moore Is.
Disb. 18.4.46

319 RADAR. Early Warning, L.W.A.W.
12.4.43 Mascot
6.6.43 Fenton
30.3.44 Drysdale
1.8.44 Anjo
3.11.44 Truscott
Disb. 9.10.45

344 RADAR. Early Warning, L.W.A.W.
15.11.43 Mascot
6.2.44 58 Mile NT (44 Radar Wing)
Emb. 23.3.44 Darwin HMAS BOMBA
Disemb. 27.3.44 West Montalivet Is.
11.9.45 Richmond NSW
Disb. 12.7.46

154 RADAR. Ground Control COL.GCI (Mobile equipment.)
20.12.43 Richmond NSW
8.6.44 58 Mile NT. (Radar Wing.)
(Personnel overland, equipment by ship)
Disemb. 23.6.44 Anjo (by Liberty Ship JOHN OWEN.)
2.11.44 Truscott
Disb. 18.4.46

Note. Anjo - Truscott - Drysdale. These names were used to describe the same locations Radar apparently used the location name Truscott from November, 1944.
i.e. 154 and 319 only had the one location

161 RADAR. LW/GCI. This unit 'staged' through Anjo(Truscott), arriving while the strip was being constructed at the end of April 1944. After about 2 weeks, the station moved out by air to 'POTSNET', and N.W.Cape, W.A. The equipment was destroyed by fire, about mid May 1944.