

59 RADAR-LEE POINT, 109 RADAR-NIGHTCLIFF.



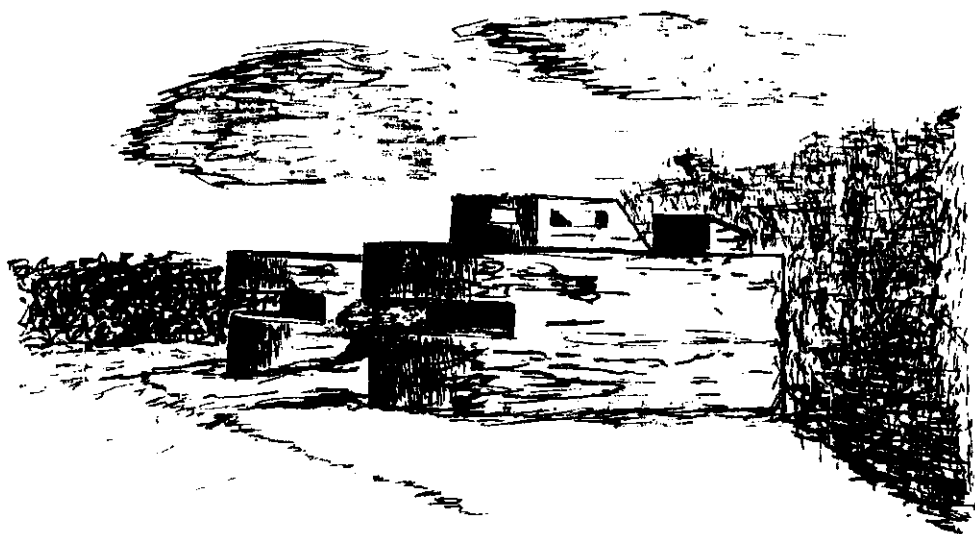
59 RADAR, LEE POINT.

Edited by MORRIE FENTON

Mom & Dad

The History and Stories
of
59 RADAR-LEE POINT,
109 RADAR-NIGHTCLIFF.

THE STATIONS ALONG THE CASUARINA COAST.



THE OBSERVATION POST AT LEE POINT.

Edited by MORRIE FENTON

59 RADAR ~ LEE POINT.
109 RADAR -- NIGHTCLIFF.
The Stations Along The Casuarina
Coast.

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Morrie Fenton.

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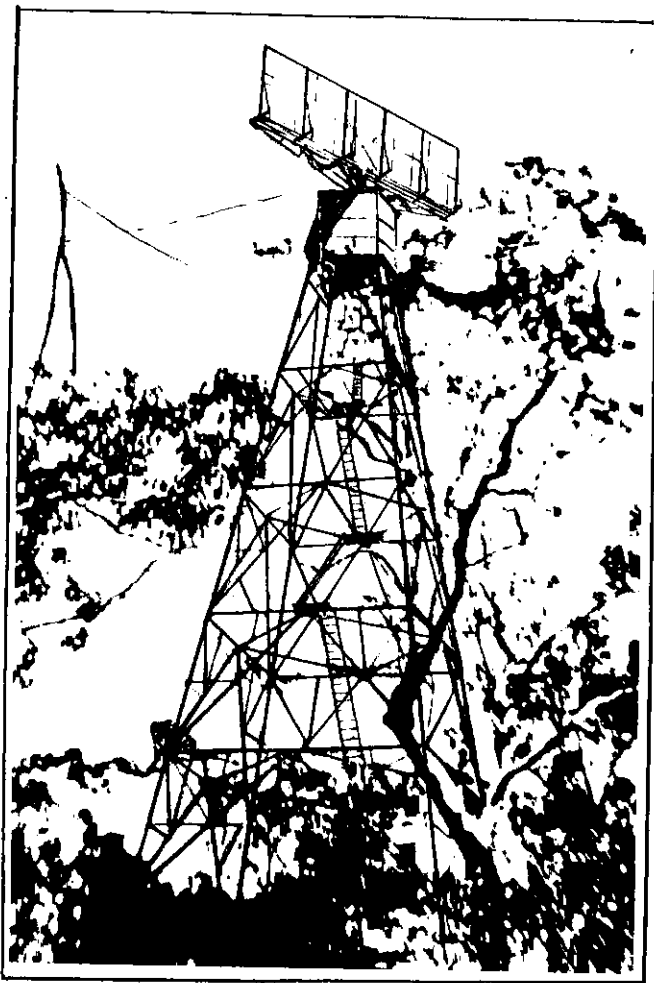
132 and 150 RADARS - THE CROSSLEY GCI's OF NWA.

WEDGE ISLAND SKETCHBOOK - 7 RADAR STORY.

327 RADAR BROOME.

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59 Radar at Lee Point was certainly one of the more spectacular of Australia's 140 war-time radar stations. While the view from the top of the 140 ft. tower was spectacular, the swaying action as the aerial inched backwards and forwards in a strong wind caused many a mechanic to thank his lucky stars when at last he was safely back on 'terra firma.'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I acknowledge with thanks the help, interest and the enthusiasm of all who are listed below. Their personal contributions, whether large or small, bring life to this little history. Ed Simmonds always helps me with names, facts and advice - so too does Pete Smith. And I was particularly pleased to hear from Hal Porter, author of "ADVENTURES IN RADAR." which was one of the earliest of our radar books and a great source of 109 history which he invited me to use.

I thank the RAAF Historical Section, Ed Simmonds, Hal Porter, Alan Cross, D.J.Day, Maurice Carter, Stan Burge, Steve Hardisty, Merv Harms, Ray Kelly, Alan Stark, Rod Harris, Ken McKenzie, Denis Banks, Max Sutherland, Ev Wade, Jim Scott, Gerry Cranage, Ian Leith, D.J.Dacy, Pete Smith and Bob Meredith.

Janet Beck of RAAF Historical made a special effort to obtain material for "Lee Point Today," and I thank her for her help.

For photos, I thank Ed Simmonds, Jim Scott, Maurice Carter, Bob Taylor, Spence Verrall, Arthur Billington, Ev Wade, Stan Burge and Rod Harris who long ago sent me a faded photo showing a hazy outline of that giant tower.

Many of the contributors mentioned have helped me with stories etc. for other station booklets, and I gratefully acknowledge their continued support.

Introduction.

59 Radar at Lee Point proved a rather difficult station to document for several reasons. Firstly, it was set up later than most radar stations in the history of the raids on Darwin - consequently its story is one of fairly routine surveillance. And it did 'take-over' from the 109 MAWD station which was west along the Casuarina coast towards Dripstone, and the 109 personnel moved into the new station as theirs closed down. So then two stations had to be documented.

When the war ended, a rapid turnover in personnel commenced with men arriving, often to stay only a few weeks before being on their way south. It's not surprising they had little interest in the station....'Home' was on their agenda and little else. The tower and aerial - the gear - the camp....all made little impression.

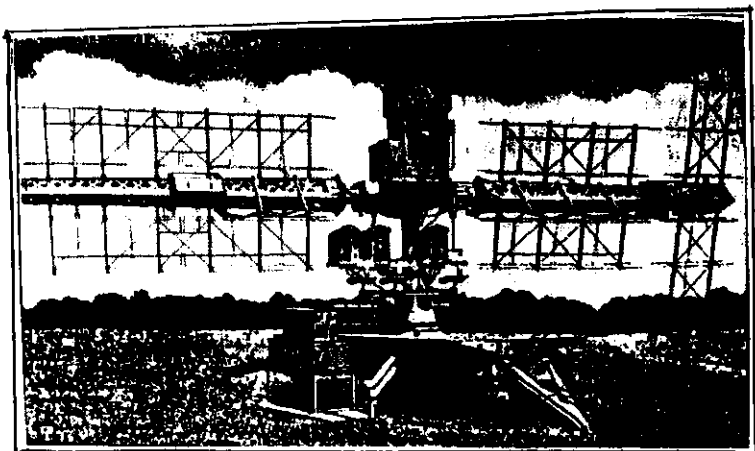
Add to that the lapses of memory in the 53 years since, and it's understandable that recollections could have been a little more vivid in many cases.

Additionally, the ex-Army radar used to track the Met. balloons, and the 257 experimental radar....both added to the rather confused scene, for there were no records of these to be traced.

Yet another confusion was the LORAN monitoring station mentioned in the Diary in August 1945. No one recalls anything about it except that on Christmas Day the men of 59 were waited on by the LORAN officers.

So the small history of 59, 109 and others ends with a few riddles still not solved. Hopefully, though, there's enough story for everyone to enjoy.

Morrie Fenton.



The "MAWD." (Extracts from "Echoes over the Pacific," page 49.)

In February 1942, American forces arrived in Australia bringing with them both SCR 270 and SCR 268 equipment. The latter were gunnery sets but without predictors, and the Australian Army could not use them. So the RAAF acquired them, and Radio Physics modified them, increasing their range to 100 miles.... and so the MAWD (Modified Air Warning Device) came to be.

The MAWDS were first known as 'Mobile Radio' sets, and they filled an urgent need in Australia, even though they were a bit tough on the Operators who sat out in the open, exposed to all the elements while operating and hand-turning the aerial.

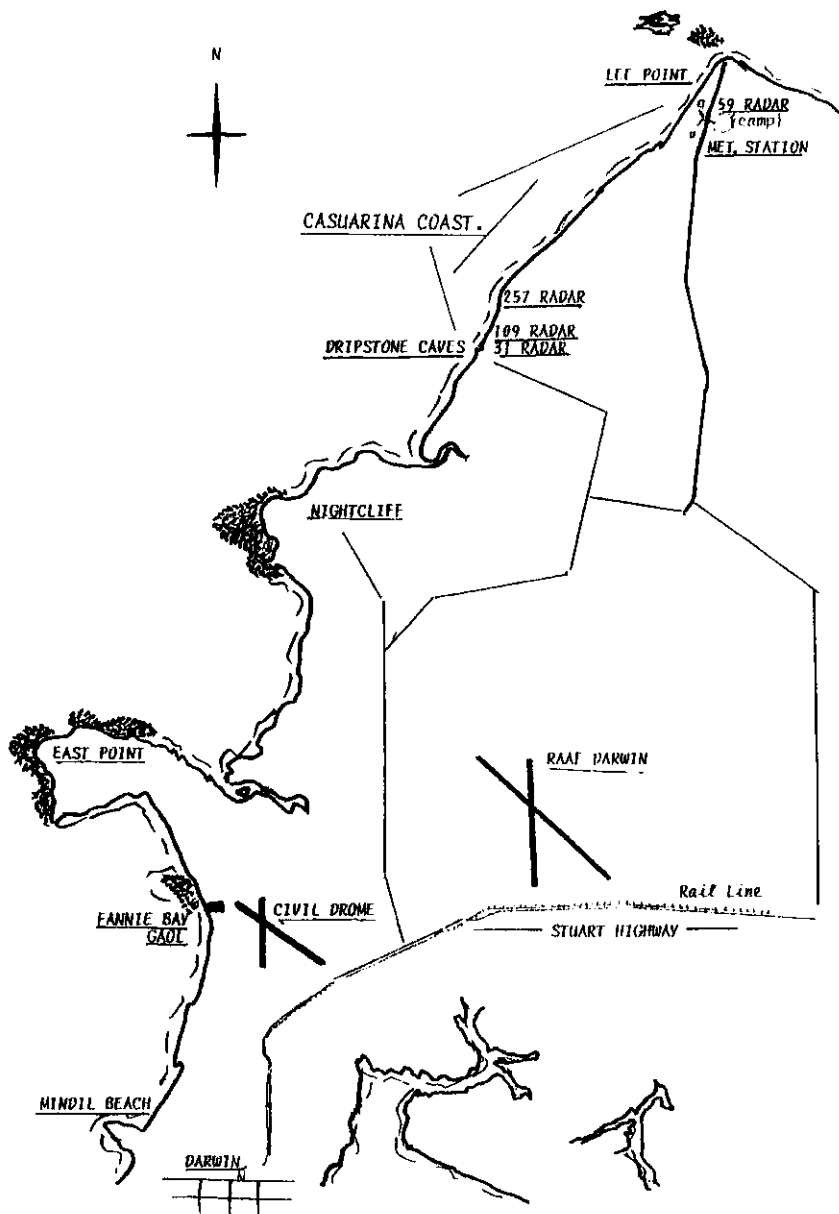
There appear to have been eight MAWDS set up in Australia which were numbered 101 - 105 and 107 - 109, and of these 105 and 109 became operational in the NWA. 105 operated at Point Charles, and 109 at Mt. Woods and Nightcliff. 105's record was probably the more impressive of the two because of its service in the most critical time of Australia's defence and after the difficulties overcome in transporting the big, heavy set by air to Batchelor after which it established an excellent record at Point Charles.

109 was transported to the N.T. by rail, evidently suffering damage in a difference of opinion with a low railway bridge. So, after arrival, it had to be repaired at 31 RDF at Dripstone which was then the main RDF station and centre in Darwin. At that stage, there was no RTMU - no Radar Wing - and Fighter Sector was still probably of the tent variety.

So, 109 suffered a few serious set-backs, firstly with the damage sustained in transit, also a largely untrained crew, and a poorly chosen initial site, after all of which a breakdown put the generator out of action soon after operating commenced at Mt. Woods. But all these difficulties were overcome when the unit moved to Nightcliff, where despite a rather limited range at times, the station located and tracked hostile aircraft on more than twenty occasions over and above the heavy local and friendly aircraft plots recorded by the unit.

The station closed in September 1943 when the Personnel moved to the new 59 Radar at Lee point. But 109 had delivered a sterling performance in its eight months' service at Nightcliff.

#####



109 RADIO STATION STARTS UP.

F.H.Porter, C.O August 1942.

109 had a difficult start. The first members were sent to 105 at Point Charles which was another MAWD station on the other side of Darwin Harbour, and 100 miles from the town and supplies. I joined them there, and we then moved to 31 at Dripstone Caves and more in the main area. There we enjoyed excellent support, but stores and equipment of all kinds were very limited, and from there we could scrounge in town.

After receiving and repairing our gear, and bolstering our meagre supplies from all possible and impossible sources, especially from the bombed areas, we were ordered to move south to Mount Woods, near Adelaide River, some sixty miles south of Darwin. It was an almost impossible site for an installation viewpoint and hopeless operationally because of the numerous permanent echoes. The latter were exacerbated by the very high back radiation of the SCR 268 aerial system. Nevertheless, we did instal the equipment, and with some help from Radiophysics' suggestions, modified the gunlaying radar for air warning purposes. Needless to say, no extra parts were supplied for this.....we had to rat them.

The whole story and more is covered in "Adventures in Radar" pages 68 to 76 Chapter 6 in my copy, but there is some variation between editions. Please feel free to use this source extensively if you so wish with the usual acknowledgement.

I should repeat here the comments made in "Adventures in Radar" written at the end of the war: 109 had a wonderful crew, and in spite of very harsh conditions, much frustration, and the calamity with the motor alternator set, never lost enthusiasm. They just kept striving for operational effectiveness.

Sadly for me, I was suddenly dispatched as C.O. 38 Radar Station on Bathurst Island and never enjoyed 109's later relocation and operation.

RAAF. Form A50.
(Feb. 38)

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation) No. 109 Radio Station, DARWIN. N.T. No. of Sheet 1

Summary of Events

Date

Place

N.T.

16/4/42 A party of 24 men arrived at 105 Radio Station, and P/O PORTER took charge to form the new Station.
18/6/42 The Radio Mechanics and Operators were attached to No. 106 for instruction and operational experience for just over two weeks.
19/8/42: 3/7/43 The C.O. and Radio Mechanics collected the stores necessary for the building of a camp. During this period the two R.D.F. trailers were unloaded from the train at WINKLEI siding and taken to No. 31 Radio Station. The equipment was given a short test as un-laying equipment but interfered with operations of No. 31 Station too much for prolonged tests. It should here be pointed out that a great degree of the damage done to the equipment during transport, except over the last stage of the journey from DALY WATKINS, was through no care being taken. A supreme example of carelessness was the collision with too low railway viaduct, breaking a considerable amount of gear, including the motor transmitter mounted and antennae. Also much gear including tools has evidently been misappropriated on its journey.
6/7/43 The 24 men arrived at No. 31 Radio Station prior to going to the new site.
5/7/43 The whole party including R.D.F. trailers proceeded to MT. WOODS starting at 1000 P.M. R.D.F. trailers not arriving until 2030 hours due to the slow speed of the convoys.

Reference to Appendix

Brought
notice of
D. R. S.
for file

The two NWA MAWD stations, 105 and 109, played a crucial role in the desperate and stressful months that followed the first raids on Darwin. 109 formed at 105, Point Charles and on 16th. June 1942, P/O Porter assembled his 23 mighty men of many musterings and became their new C.O. Two weeks was his allotted time to train and equip them for their work on their MAWD station in those days when it was 'every station for itself' - tools, equipment and materials were just not available via regular channels. Somehow the basic necessities were gathered together, and when the MAWD and generator arrived at Winnellie, the men moved it to Dripstone, then the principal air warning centre in the NWA, where the gear was repaired and modified, for it had been damaged on its rail trip up to Darwin.

Then came the difficult move to the newly chosen site at Mt. Woods, and this story is told in the following extract from ADVENTURES IN RADAR, by F.H.(Hal) Porter.

Hal Porter's "ADVENTURES IN RADAR" gives a wonderfully descriptive picture of early radar in NWA, and was written soon after the war.

An excellent summary of the 109 story appears in the radar book, "Radar Yarns" by Ed Simmonds and Norm Smith.

M.Fenton.

109 MOVES TO MT. WOODS.

Hal Porter, (C.O. June 1942)

.....After several days spent repairing (the MAWD) the ultimate destination for 109 Radar Station was announced. Strange that the place chosen (Mt. Woods) was sixty miles back along the railway line about eight miles north of Adelaide River, but as in the Army, one is mucked about by experts. The station's job would be to provide local cover for Batchelor and the surrounding area, and to assist the ack-ack defences commanded by Major Mander-Jones. The American 49th. Pursuit Group provided two ten wheel lorries, and the unit's Chevrolet truck added to the transport. A trailer was hitched behind each American truck. Barracks equipment was loaded on all three lorries, the wonderful water tank on the 30 cwt. Chevrolet.

The height of barracks equipment exceeded eight feet above the floor of the truck. Standing like the Statue of Liberty was the tank on which perched a few brave airmen, including Alec Peebles, an as yet untried operator but a first-rate organiser who was used to camping and open air life. The mighty trek started about eight in the morning making two knots. On the main road south speed increased by fifty percent. The roar of the engines in second gear was drowned by the rattle of the equipment and the musical notes made by the heavy gear rolling in the tank. The best simile to describe this convoy's noise is the music of the Turkish Patrol. Amidst the piles of gear the head or the other end of an airman showed itself intermittently. On the sides of the two green radar trailers were chalked such signs as:

"Curtin's Conducted Tours"

"On the road to Tokyo"

"Wirth's Circus"

"We Open Tonight"

By midday the forward echelon moved ahead. This part of the force comprised the Chevrolet. At fifty miles an hour we raced to the site. A search party was immediately despatched to find our position, Mount Woods. I was sure of my position but apparently the mountain was not. By four in the afternoon the site was found and a base formed. At nine that night a light, slowly, almost imperceptibly, moved along the road. Frantically we finished the road for the trailers to our new, temporary camp. By ten they were

both at base and supper was started.

The circus illusion was further enhanced by the light of the open fire on the men's faces. Instead of bronzed Australians, all that could be seen were powdered faces, covered with fine straw-coloured Darwin dust. A few red Indians including AC1 operator Dobney and our cook LAC Fry were present owing to a change in the composition of the road.

At nine next morning only the birds were awake. After everyone was up and breakfasted the first haul up the hill was started. The gradient was one in five along a stony ridge on which, for no apparent reason, a few trees grew. The stone formation was most weird and probably volcanic. The rock strata instead of being horizontal was vertical. The rubber conservation plan received a serious set-back, our tyres were ripped to pieces.

By the end of the day the whole of the camp with the trailers reached the bottom of the mount, which stood some eighty feet higher.

Next day the fun started in earnest. A rough track to the top was cut, with the gradient approaching one in two.

The 'light' trailer, some four tons, was securely coupled to one ten wheeler. Logs were dragged behind the wheels of the lorry and trailer in case of brake failure. The bridge damage would be mild compared to a smart dash down that hill.

The truck, of rated load two tons, maximum tow one ton, moved the trailer about a third of the way up the hill. The winch in the front of the truck was then unwound and the end made fast to a tree at the top of the hill. Slowly the strain was taken and simultaneously the lorry hauled, and its own winch hauled it. Luckily the men had been warned to keep clear. The rope - five eighths inch diameter steel - snapped with the noise of a rifle crack. The whole train rolled back on the logs which saved the day. Gradually the trailer was restored to a more secure position at the foot of the slope.

The second ten wheeler was coupled in front of the first and the winch rope secured to a tree. Gradually under howling motors the trailer was moved to the top. So far so good. The top was barely fifty feet in diameter with steep sides. It took two hours to manoeuvre the trailer into position and to get the lorries back to the heavier trailer at the bottom. The seven ton baby was easily moved into position following the lessons learnt in the first move.

In the days that followed, a camp was started and petrol hauled to the top. Building a camp at the top of a sharp ridge is rather difficult. One walked out the back of a tent to crash two hundred feet down the slope. A few large red kangaroos supervised all proceedings.

A shower was made without difficulties by the mechanics and operators, and the water supply was easy as the tank was beside the road on top of the ridge. This avoided pumping.

While efforts were made to coax MAWD into an air warning frame of mind the installation of the camp proper started.

Digging holes was a tremendous problem. Picks and crowbars blunted in no time. Andy, Charlie, Alec, Martin, Lynch, Crossly, Dickman, Daff and Dobnay spent hours getting the camp on its feet. It was not an operator's job, but it had to be done and it was. Envious eyes were cast at an American lorry with a post-hole digger mounted on the back. Two minutes for a hole six feet deep and a foot across was not to be sneezed at.

Parties collected tons of bamboo which grew prolifically along the creeks. Green stinging ants made the task unpleasant, not to mention the sharp thorns of the creeper, lovingly entwined around the tall stalks.

Platforms were made of timber and floors of bamboo laid on them. The resultant tent was a beautifully cool, clean home. One stood on the verandah, some eight feet above the ground and surveyed the scenery in the valley

below which was by no means unpleasant. The drainage for the wet season was solved automatically. Scrounging had not been in vain....the camp became comparatively luxurious.

The Army butcher at Adelaide River had a broken radio. The radar mechanics fixed it and ensured a most generous meat supply. Similar assistance to the greengrocer made the meals superb. They even forgave Tubby our cook, alias Cpl Fry, for singing one song every day and all day - "Down by the old Mill Stream."

The dry season inland (May to September) is wonderful, if away from dust - blue skies all day, hot and dry with beautiful crystal clear cool nights. Sgt. Reg Day joined the unit as equipment NCO and took a great worry from me. Between him and Cpl. Sheffield, the Orderly Room NCO, I had little to be concerned about in the way of returns to NWA H/Q in spite of there being some twenty to thirty a month.

Heavy dews kept the grass alive and often in the morning our little camp was floating in a sea of mist. These mornings were most agreeable. The climate left nothing to be desired. Health was excellent and cool nights ensured good sleep and sometimes four blankets were needed to keep out the early morning chill. Sweaters until nine in the morning were the rule, rather than the exception.

The technicians had not been wasting their time - MAWD was becoming tame. Installation work was conducted at night under the glare of a hundred watt light, to facilitate observing results on the screen.

During one night raid just before morning a bomb landed four hundred yards away, but apart from this we suffered no real danger.

At last MAWD was started but we found trouble with the surrounding hills, just like the Americans did, with their early 'home' installations. Although we did some reasonable effective raid plotting, results were rather erratic and the unit was moved back to Darwin. The Army took advantage of the excellent camp.

THE 109 STORY NOW CONTINUES FROM THE STATION DIARY.

M.Fenton.

AUGUST.

The month began with extensive work on camouflaging the Doover, but then the Le Roi generator motor developed a serious knock because of a crack appearing in a casting carrying a crankshaft bearing. The station was inoperative for seven days while an Army workshop attended to repairs and then resuscitated the monster.

The best range so far - 90 miles - was achieved on the 23rd. This was on a broken formation of Jap bombers heading out to sea.

On the last day of the month, the Commanding Officer, P/O Porter departed on posting to 38 RS on Bathurst Island.

SEPTEMBER.

P/O Bacon arrived on the 4th. September to take over command, but his stay did not last long. He hardly had arrived and looked at the place before he was on his way also, after only 12 days, also to 38 RS on Bathurst Island and P/O Mathieson arrived to do the job as C.O.

The best range for September had been 78 miles.

The C.O. reported:- "During the month, considerable improvements in the camp have been effected, including a fly-proof kitchen, mess-hut and new ablution conveniences. As a check on the Radio Operators' eye-sight, all were sent to an eye specialist in the Area for detailed examination. Faults were found in many cases but it is expected that these will be rectified by certain eye exercises prescribed by the specialist."

OCTOBER, 1942.

The rapid turnover in Commanding Officers continued this month again....and on October 10th. P/O Mathieson departed and F/O Bennett arrived to command the unit, only to be replaced 3 days later when P/O Bacon again took charge. No doubts Sergeants proved their worth at times like these! On 23rd. October, Wing Commander Pither, Director of Radio Stations visited 109 - detailed plans were then made for the transfer and removal of the station to a new site over the next several weeks. Enemy bombs fell in close proximity to the station on 24th. October, and then the week following was fully taken up in preparing to move the camp to the selected site at Nightcliff on the Casuarina coast, and close to where 31 RS was located at Dripstone.

NOVEMBER 1942.

Diary entries for this month are few indeed - on 8th. November P/O Bacon was posted away, and on the 9th. F/O Abbott arrived to act as Temporary C.O. Finally, on 17th. November, Wing Commander Laver, the Principal Medical Officer for the Area arrived to cast an eye over the arrangements being made at the new camp which evidently was being set up and brought to operational status at its new site.

DECEMBER 1942.

On 4th. December, the PMO was back again on the unit, this time with an Ophthalmologist, the idea being to check the eyesight of the Radio personnel. Then from the 6th. to the 12th. December came 5 days of instruction for all personnel in bayonet drill.

F/O Evans from 105 at Point Charles arrived on the 23rd. December to command 109, and the MAWD gear was closed down preparatory to loading and moving it to its new coastal site. There seems to have been no special Christmas day celebration.

On the 26th. December, P/O Blumenthal who had evidently been attached to the unit over this period, was posted to No. 1 Embarkation Depot.

JANUARY 1943.

At 1600 hours on New Years Day, 109 officially closed down at Mount Woods and was moved to Dripstone, next to 31 RS. The operational equipment, the Mechanics and Operators moved out on the 3rd with operations re-commencing at the new site on 10th. January with an interesting change in its identification title....it was now known as 109 RDF (Radio Direction Finding) station. At this site there were many aircraft movements to be tracked everyday and night, and the station performance varied greatly, the best range for the first month being 125 miles while following an outgoing aircraft. More importantly, an aircraft identified as 'hostile' was located at 112 miles.

The station strength was recorded as 33.

FEBRUARY 1943.

The Commanding Officer, F/O Evans, attended a conference on 1st. February at the NWA H/Q which detailed operational plans, emergency moves and special exercises. The importance of this was emphasized at 109 the following day when another hostile was detected and tracked. And on the 3rd. some long range 'Temperature Inversion' was observed....this was to become a feature of this coastal area and across to the TIWI Islands. Another hostile was detected at 52 miles on the 6th., then on the 8th. night-time practice with search light co-ordination commenced which was repeated on the 10th. and 15th, with the station 'off air' for 5½ hours on the 13th. for Tx maintenance and overhaul.

With the station now sited near the coast, shipping plots were now detected; there were three vessels on the 16th., 20th., and 27th., all at a range of 11 miles or less - and there were three inspections to check camp hygiene, the camouflage work, and the Security Guards Detachment. TT and TAB injections were also attended to by the RDF Medical Officer.

124 miles appears to have been the best range for this month.

MARCH 1943.

The month started with 109 tracking another hostile - it was picked up at 77 miles almost due west, then it was tracked out to 64 miles on a reciprocal bearing 1 hour 10 minutes later. Then on the 7th. another hostile appeared at 47 miles - it was intercepted 30 minutes later at a range of only 8 miles and crashed in the sea almost exactly north of 109.

There was a 'false alarm' on the 14th., (usually a friendly not showing IFF) - then on the 15th. several hostiles were tracked in from 119 miles and bombs were dropped over Darwin, then they were followed out about an hour later. Considerable Allied fighter activity was also plotted. And there was much Allied air traffic over the remainder of the month; then on the 30th. the Area Education Officer visited 109 to interview applicants for commissions. The best range for the month was on the 28th. when an outgoing aircraft was tracked to 150 miles.

APRIL, 1943.

The busy air traffic movements continued into April, and mostly at reasonably good ranges. Then on the 5th. and 6th., 109 co-operated in search-light exercises and practices - probably a searchlight unit was sited close to the station. Then on the 10th. from the early hours before dawn until 10 a.m., abnormal echoes from the TIWI Islands were recorded, indicating Temperature Inversion was showing up. Then on the 16th. another searchlight co-op exercise was arranged, and on the 19th., yet another hostile was detected and tracked.

Wing Commander Pither, Director of RDF Services, visited 109 on the 26th., and he was accompanied by the C.O. of RDF Wing and the Area RDF Officer: then before the month ended there were another two searchlight exercises. Probably a few night visits were expected. 96 miles was the best range this month, and there were 35 men on the station.

MAY 1943.

On the 2nd. May, warning was given to 5 FS. that a large number of aircraft was approaching. These crossed the coast about 1 mile from 109 before dropping bombs on RAAF Darwin. Records show that 17 enemy aircraft were destroyed or damaged - but there were severe Allied losses too. The station Diary claims the range obtained on these aircraft was the best to date - 160 miles - obtained perhaps by 'doubling' the trace. And early next morning T.I. echoes from the TIWI Islands appeared again.

There were more searchlight co-op exercises during the evening of the 11th., and on the 16th. there was a trial interception practice which was successful. Two more searchlight exercises took place on the 18th. and 19th. May, also another practice interception on the 19th. and another on the 22nd. A hostile reconce was detected on the 24th., and then other than tracking friendly aircraft, activities for the month finished on the 25th. with another searchlight co-op effort. 109 was obviously filling a very important role in Darwin's defences in these decisive times.

JUNE 1943.

The usual local plots were recorded on aircraft in and out of Darwin - and on the 3rd was another searchlight exercise took place - then on the 7th.

there were IFF test flights with Spitfires - also a successful searchlight co-op exercise. On the 12th. there was a calibration flight to check the accuracy of the gear.

An enemy recce was tracked down to the Batchelor area on the 17th., then later another unidentified plot proved to be a Spitfire with no IFF. Many unidentified aircraft were detected at 117 miles on the 20th., at a height of approximately 18000 feet, and these were intercepted. At 1044 hours, a visual was obtained on 15 aircraft, then 9 minutes later 9 hostiles appeared at tree top height near the camp and they were strafing at random. More bombers appeared south of 109, and cannon shells exploded in the Doover area. The hostiles then flew out over the sea at low height. This engagement proved quite intense as 14 enemy planes were destroyed, and 10 were damaged. 3 Spitfires were destroyed or damaged. The target had been RAAF Darwin and Winnellie.

Yet another unidentified, and obviously hostile, was detected on the 22nd. This plane was tracked around Darwin harbour....then on the 23rd. more hostiles were tracked in over Darwin from 115 miles - height 18000, and these were intercepted. Finally on the 30th., many hostiles were tracked in from 122 miles, height 22000 feet, and these were also tracked out in three formations. Fenton Field had been the target, and there were severe losses on both sides.

JULY 1943.

The month began with the usual local air activity, and on the 3rd. F/O Evans was replaced by P/O Worboys as Commanding Officer. On the 6th., an enemy aircraft was detected at 121 miles and it was intercepted at 77 miles. There was a raid on Fenton this day. 5 Fighter Sector congratulated this station on the value of its plots, and included in their remarks the performance in tracking enemy aircraft on 30th. June.

On the 7th. work commenced on repairing and renewing the station camouflage, and the Principal Medical Officer and his Deputy visited 109 on the 9th. to check the camp hygiene.

A Defence course commenced on the 12th., and two local men completed a Defence course for NCO Instructors.

The Army Liaison Defence Officer visited the station on the 14th., and on the 15th. a replacement Security Guards Detachment in charge of Sgt. Nagel took over.

An enemy recce was shot down 30 miles east of Darwin on the 18th., then on the 21st. the almost universal radar sport of cricket was introduced to 109, and a team was to be carefully selected. Evidently an association was about to be introduced among the Darwin units.

The Commanding Officer and the off-duty personnel were invited to attend a concert at 5FS on the 22nd, and on the 26th. plots from several Hudsons (probably transport planes) were recorded. Finally on the 29th. a peculiar echo, slow moving and even stationary at times, was picked up and labelled as a submarine by the 3 stations that tracked it.

The best range this month appears to be 121 miles, and there were 37 men on the station.

AUGUST 1943.

The routine, every-day work of plotting aircraft in and out of Darwin continued, the only departure from this occurred when the new Commanding Officer of the Security Guards Unit visited the camp to look over the Guards unit at 109.

There was a hostile recce on the 7th., and again on the 11th. - and Mr. Edwards from Radiophysics visited on the 16th. to check the Meteorological equipment as a possible source of interference to the MAWD.

On the 18th., the C.O. P/O Worboys departed, leaving the station to be watched over by the C.O. of 31 RDF, pending the arrival of 109's new Commanding Officer.

More hostiles were tracked on the 21st. at 02.29 hours - distant bomb explosions were heard and the 'All Clear' sounded at 0430 hours.

F/O J.B.Hughes, the new Commanding Officer, arrived on the 23rd. - his important task was to supervise the dismantling and dispatch of the MAWD equipment to 44 RDF Wing, then to bring the new station 'on line.'

On the 25th., the movement and transfer of men and stores etc to Lee Point commenced. The move was finalised the next day, also of all stores and the Orderly Room. The camp area, sanitation etc were all cleared and cleaned up on the 27th. Meanwhile the Technical Personnel concentrated on checking the installation of the English COL equipment.

And so the changeover was effected from 109 RDF station to 59 Radar Station, for this was the time of the adoption of the term 'Radar.'

SEPTEMBER 1943.

By the 14th. September, the new station was ready to go on air and was being tested - and enemy aircraft raiding Fenton were picked up. 59 Radar became operational at 0001 hours on the 16th. During the remainder of the month, calibration flights were arranged - there were visits from the C.O. of Wing, the Signals Officer and the Medical Officer - and a couple of extremely good ranges were recorded, one of 200 miles on a Catalina. The station strength at this time was 47 men.

OCTOBER 1943.

Several long ranges were recorded in October indicating that a good station performance could be expected - and on 12th. LAC J.B.Harrington (Mech.) LAC A.J.Tye, and LAC W.A.Fraser (Operators) were promoted to Temporary Corporals.

Official inspections took place on the 16th., and W/Cdr. Peter Jeffrey, the Commanding Officer of Fighter Wing, visited on the 17th.

On the 20th., the Personnel of 109 were officially transferred over to 59 Radar with a truly great record to maintain, for in its 14 months of front-line service, 109 the MAWD station had detected or tracked more than 20 enemy intrusions and raids. A record to be proud of.

OPERATIONS RECORD

of (Unit or Formation) No.109 R.D.F. STATION

Summary of Events

Date	Summary of Events
21.9.43	Fighter Sector advised hostile aircraft at 0229 hours. Normal sweep was maintained during greater part of activity by direction from No.5 F.S. and hostile targets picked up from time to time. Interference was heavy during most of the activity. Distant bombs were heard approximately 0255 hrs. All clear sounded at 0430 hours.
22.9.43	Station closed down at 1330 hours to enable high tension cable to be forwarded to No.105 R.D.F. Station.
23.9.43	F/O. J.B. HUGHES (59705) arrived to supervise dismantling of MAWD Equipment and to arrange its transmission to No. 44 R.D.F. Wing.
24.9.43	Movs of Personnel to LEE POINT, C.O.L. commenced.
25.9.43	Movement of personnel, stores and Orderly Room to new camp completed.
26.9.43	Work on completion of installation of R.D.F. Equipment.
27.9.43	Work on completion of installation of R.D.F. Equipment.
28.9.43	Work on completion of installation of R.D.F. Equipment.
29.9.43	Work on completion of installation of R.D.F. Equipment.
30.9.43	Work on completion of installation of R.D.F. Equipment.

RECOLLECTIONS OF 109 RDF STATION, December 1942 to May 1943.

Alan Cross.

To recall events and circumstances of nearly 57 years ago requires profound memory searching and recollection.....

109 RDF (as it was then known) was a MAWD set (Modified Air Warning Device), originally built for the United States Army as a gun laying set. (Refer to pages 49 - 53, "Echoes over the Pacific," Ed. Simmonds and Norm Smith.)

I arrived in the North Western Area during December 1942, and was posted to 109 Unit while it was at Mt. Woods, some 30 to 40 miles south of Darwin, on the 18th. of that month. The camp appeared to have been built in great haste and was ill-prepared for service life, having only minimal supplies and facilities. The Mess, I recall, was an open-sided hut, and the cooking facilities were quite primitive. There was one 5 cubic feet kerosene refrigerator to serve the entire unit. We had tents in which to sleep, and the camp site was not flat.

Other recollections of Mt. Woods and the MAWD unit are:-

1. It was close by Pell Field where, I understand, 31 Beaufighter Squadron was based at that time. Our camp was in the direct flight path of landing aircraft, and peculiar to Beaufighters, we heard them only as they passed overhead. (Major Pell was a US Air Officer who distinguished himself on 19th. February 1942, on the day when Darwin was first bombed, but later that day he was killed by a Japanese aircraft.)

2. Every attempt was made to have a pleasant Christmas Day, but conditions at the time were not conducive to any celebration. However, I do recall that each serviceman was allotted half a bottle of hot NSW beer for the occasion. I don't recall with whom I shared my bottle, but I know I did not finish my portion and have had a dislike for hot NSW beer ever since.

3. The MAWD equipment was cumbersome, weighing some 20 tons, and we sat in the open on a seat similar to a plough seat, all metal, and we sat in the open with a tarpaulin as protection against inclement weather which was frequent at that time of the year. We peered into a pair of "eye viewers" to see a small screen. We could remove the "viewers" after dark, but daytime viewing caused considerable eye strain. (Page 7 of "Echoes over the Pacific" illustrates a MAWD set.)

4. Direction, or bearing, was achieved by rotating a hand wheel, and considering the width of the antenna, was quite heavy. I cannot recall how accurate the direction was for Fighter Sector purposes.

5. The siting of the unit at Mt. Woods proved very unsatisfactory, and in January 1943, we packed up and shifted to Dripstone Caves to become a neighbour of 31 RS with whom we shared facilities, though living separately in our own tents. 109 operated independently and became quite successful at that venue complementing 31 RS.

I remained at 109 until 23rd. May 1943 when I was posted to 318 RS at Batchelor.

Whilst at the Dripstone Caves site, we were able to view Japanese aircraft as they approached Darwin. The raid of 2nd. May 1943 would have been the most significant, and in conjunction with 31 RS, we assisted greatly with the tracking of the raiders. On that day 109 was able to record a range of 160 miles...something never achievable at Mt. Woods.

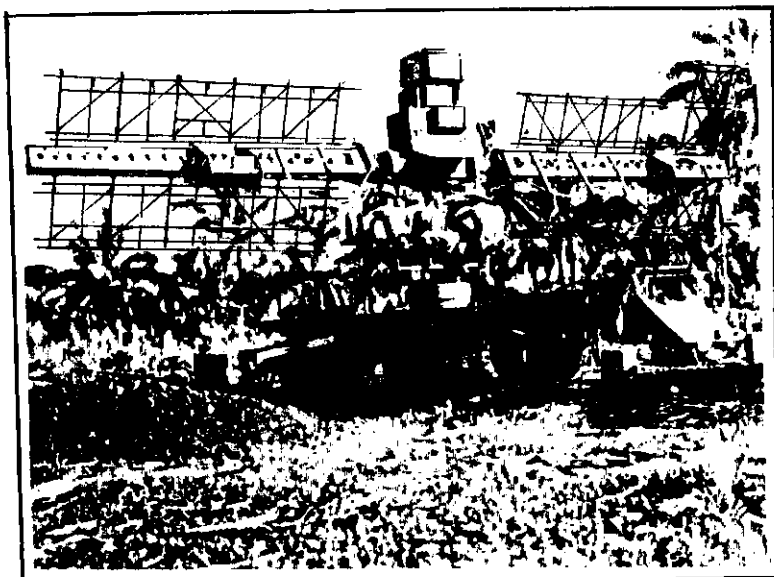
With the introduction of the LW/AW units, 109 became redundant, and I understand was withdrawn from service shortly after I left the unit. "Echoes over the Pacific," page 268, states that all MAWD units were disbanded

during 1943.

In summary, it was an experience to have operated MAWD, but nonetheless I am pleased that the experience was replaced by operating more sophisticated equipment, and under more congenial conditions.

MAWD was cumbersome and operator unfriendly, but I cannot comment on it technically.

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105 RS at Point Charles and 109 RS at Mt. Woods and Nightcliff were the two MAWD stations set up in the N.W.A. 105 was a very early station and proved very successful. 109 was set up later and had considerable success after it moved to Nightcliff (which actually was only a few yards from 31 RS at Dripstone).

The MAWD Operators worked out in the open and tended to suffer from eyestrain and exposure, besides finding the gear very heavy to work. Both stations closed in late 1943 as more AW stations came on air.

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109 RADIO STATION (From the first P.O.R.)

PERSONNEL.

Commanding Officer. P/O. F.S.Porter.

Radar Personnel.

Harrison.	R.H.	Mechanic.
Haynes.	B.A.	"
McDougall.	B.R.	"
Crossley.	S.A.	Operator.
Daff.	W.C.	"
Dickman	V.A.	"
Dobney.	G.B.	"
Hanley.	R.	"
Kelly	T.H.	"
Lucas.	N.A.	"
Martin.	N.	"
McIntyre.	C.D.	"
Peebles.	A.M.	"
Taylor.	H.R.	"
Wignell	M.H.	"

Thompson.	A.	W.T.Operator.
Dawson.	M.F.	"
Cottle	L.N.	"
Carpenter.	S.J.	Fitter.
Wilkinson.	J.L.	Messman.
Fry.	A.	Cook.
Green.	C.A.	Medic.
Hodgkinson.	A.E.G.	General Hand.

PERSONNEL.

Commanding Officers.

P.O. F.H.Porter.
P.O. L.Bacon.
P.O. C.J.Mathieson.

F.O. R.E.Abbott.
P.O. C.Blumenthal.
F.O. P.E.Evans.

P.O. C.S.Worboys.
F.O. L.E.Radclyffe.
F.O. J.B.Hughes.

Radar Mechanics.

Gye. J.H.
Hackshaw. R.H.
Jonkergouw. R.
Gambling. G.S.
Page. L.M.
Clausen. T.R.
Reid. H.S.
House. A.G.

Radar Operators.

Amy. N.F.
Weinert. M.L.
Cripps. K.H.C.
Buckland. J.L.
Schmidt. L.H.
Kickling. L.T.
Hall. R.L.
Georges. J.A.
Cross. A.M.
Davies. D.W.
Bushby. N.R.
Campbell. G.N.
Harburg. C.H.
Nice. J.H.
Felton. R.G.
Mills. W.G.

Fitters, D.M.T's.

Rolton. R.L.
Baxter. J.F.
Selwood. R.W.
Farrow. R.W.
Alexander. J.
Wooding. A.W.
Bran. H.A.
Ward. R.
Lewis. R.T.
Payne. A.G.
Harrington. N.E.
Thomas. H.E.
Head. D.J.

Medic. Orderlies.

Hart. B.M.
Foster. R.J.

Clerical.

EBbs. H.L.
Day. R.N.
Sheffield. S.R.

Wireless and Phone Ops.

Harley H.C.
Costin. A.McV.
Bate. A.J.
Case. E.A.
Brideson. N.
Craft. G.F.

Cooks.

Darnley. R.S.
Sharp. B.A.
Ismail. N.
Harding. F.E.

Mess. Staff.

Campbell V.R.
Dwyer. M.
Gunson. R.C.
Watson. W.R.
Shuttleworth. T.D.
Ashton. F.W.
Griggs. L.K.

Miscellaneous.

Hall. H.R.
Treloar. V.E.

Guards.

George. H.S.
Wookey. J.
Hill. J.
Thow. R.K.
Whitehead. W.
Minch. R.
Mitchell. R.M.
Roper. W.M.
Brandt. A.
Ryan. L.J.
Edwards. J.D.

All names that could be traced
are included in these two pages
of Personnel names.
However, the lists must be regarded
as very incomplete.

EARLY DAYS AT LEE POINT.

The important and factual account that follows comprises extracts from the Diary of Sergeant V.J. Dacy, who obviously for a time, was involved in the construction of the camp and the tower at 59 Radar at Lee Point. From "clues" in the story, Sergeant Dacy was at the time a member of the 3 Mobile Installation Section of 1 RIMU at Croydon, Sydney. So....the likely history of the tower is that it was prefabricated in the New South Wales Railway Workshops, to the specifications of 1 RIMU, who in turn gave the task of building it to one of its mobile construction teams.

Tan Leith, who was a Mechanic at both 109 and 59, happened to keep a copy of a Darwin Tenders advertisement when the tower was to be removed and sold - and that advert is reproduced at the end of the 59 story so making it as complete as possible.

March 20th. 1943. At present we are again encamped at 31 RS on the sea shore. We have another tower to build (110 ft) which will take us at least 3 months.

March 29. Since last writing we have started on our new job and have been putting in some very hard work. A good deal of that is ahead of us for the next 3 months. The 'dry' has definitely commenced. The long grass is now ripened and beginning to flatten. Our days are really glorious - clear, deep blue skies and a brilliant sun just a tiny fraction too warmish. I doubt if I have ever previously mentioned our pet snake "Douglas" who derived his name from one of the lads who has a penchant for "bashing the spine". One bright spirit declared that the snake and Doug had much in common since they were both always lying down. The idea took on so the name stuck and the snake became "Douglas".

Well, Douglas was a pretty fellow, four feet long and as thick as my thumb. He was coloured a brilliant yellow underside and was a brownish yellow on top. For weeks he lived in his little box and became quite tame so that he could be taken out and handled with impunity. He would coil himself round your arm and liked nothing so much as to be stroked under the chin. For a long time he would not eat, then one day he swallowed a little frog with every evidence of a hearty appetite returned. Great was the rejoicing in 3 Mobile, and we were all on the lookout for tasty morsels to feed our pet.....

.....Well, to conclude the tale of Douglas, one day recently we placed him in a trench about 4 feet deep to have a run. Douglas (unknown to us) managed to stand on his tail and as he gazed out on the glories of the bush and the long, tall grass, his joy knew no bounds. Unmindful of his kind friends, he crept up the side of the trench and slithered away among the cool grass. We often think that he could not find his way back to the trench and so is out there now lost in a part of the bush that is strange to him. So that is the sad tale of Douglas. Does he think of us with regret as often as we think of him? I wonder! Poor Douglas, we miss him.

April 11th. 1943. We have completed the building of the new camp for 31 RS* and are now digging the foundations for the 135 ft. steel tower radio station that we will be building. The ground is terribly hard and has to be blasted out with gelignite. The clay is honey-combed with holes in all directions. In these we have discovered huge green frogs and centipedes up to six inches long.

April 15th. 1943. Today we hacked our way through the thickest jungle I have ever experienced, in an attempt to cut a direct path through to the sea. Dense undergrowth consisting mainly of coiling and writhing creepers

impeded our path. Huge spiders had placed their webs at head height between the trees. Dozens of hornets' nests hung from the trees as we discovered to our cost. Hermit crabs scuttled across the ground dragging their conical shells behind. Vivid, gorgeous butterflies of unusual size and hue flitted above our heads. We came to a very steep declivity leading down to the sea. Outcrops of hard, clay rock of the type into which we have been digging dotted the cliff and presented a really pretty sight with green moss and mould standing out vividly from the red and yellow clay. Everything here was moist and dank. A little streamlet reippled gently over the stones on its way to the sea. I was reminded ever so much of a cool glade in Sherbrooke Forest and felt quite overcome with homesickness. Yes, I'm afraid I've had Darwin. Seven months before I see the loved faces and places. It's a long time.

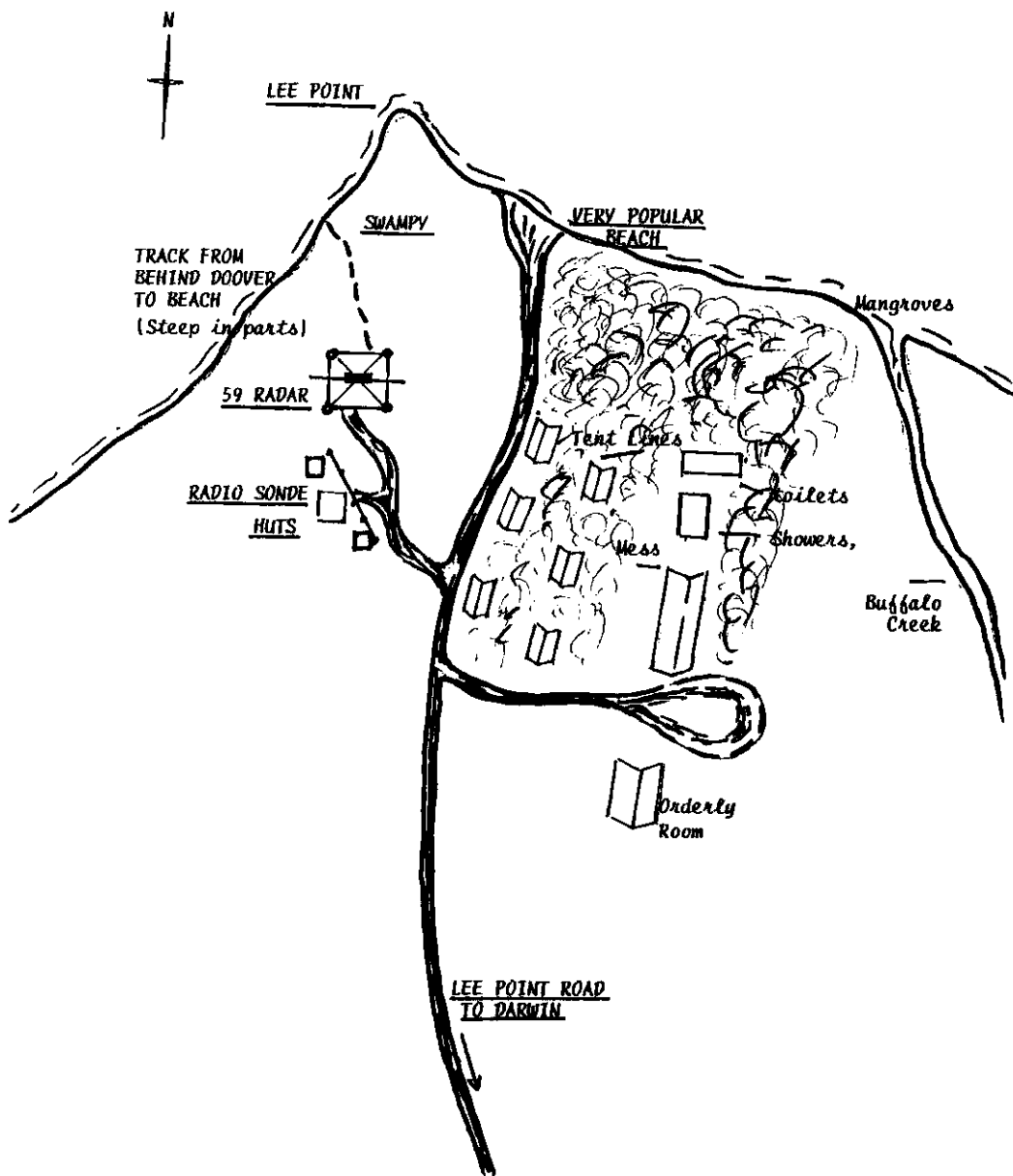
April 16th. 1943. YIPPEE! I'm going home as soon as arrangements can be made to get me away. Have been recalled to Croydon.

* 31 RS at Dripstone was soon to move away and become 310 Radar. It was probably thought that 31 RS would takeover the new station.

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SPITFIRES STRAFE REEF
TO PRACTISE.



OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

of (Unit or Formation) 59 RADAR STATION

Form A-1 (Rev. 21)

No. of Sheet ONE

Place	Date	Summary of Events	Remarks
		No. 59 RADAR STATION formed to establishment 59-594A at Lee Point	
		DARWIN, under the command of F/O J.B. HUGHES (68705). Equipment G.O.L. No. 5.	
		Personnel 109 RADAR STATION posted to 59 RADAR STATION Authority	
	20/10/43	B.P.S.O's RD/5/4/43	
	20/10	B24's (Liberators) tracked in from 146 miles on I.P.F. and 137 miles on echo.	X
	27/10	Hostile reconnaissance aircraft located at 127 miles and tracked out at 124 miles - 27 plots.	X
	26/10	Inspection of Station by F/Lt. R.W. WADSWLEY, C.O. 44 RADAR WING, and F/Lt. R. CHILTON.	
	26/10	B24's tracked out to 154 miles on echo and 162 miles on I.P.F.	
	26/10	Hostile reconnaissance aircraft located 116 miles and tracked out at 115 miles - 10 plots.	
	30/10	Inspection of Station Operations by Mr. T. EDWARDS from R.F. Research Officers R.A.A.F. 1. Airman 40.	

Officer Commanding
59 RADAR STATION
R.A.A.F.

EXTRACTS OF HISTORY FROM THE A50 DIARY OF 59 RADAR.

59 Radar at Lee Point - some 12 miles or so N.E. of Darwin - was undoubtedly the most spectacular of the many WW2 radar stations in the NWA with its great bat-wing aerial revolving - and swaying too at times - on top of its giant windmill type tower some 140 feet high. The station's formation was unusual too. Not the usual painful beginning at Richmond or Mascot for 59 Radar....this was a 'takeover' or merger action 50 years before such actions became fashionable for high profile business houses.

Actually, it's hard to say whether 59 RS 'took over' 109 RS, or whether 109 changed its number and took over 59. Either way, the change-over came about in October 1943 when the Commanding Officer of 109, F/O J.B. Hughes and his personnel moved the few miles from Nightcliff to Lee Point where the big COL station was waiting, ready to go 'on air' and promptly becoming operational as 59 Radar.

Only two days later a flight of Liberators was tracked in from 146 miles on IFF - 137 miles on echo only - and on 26th. October the station tracked a 'hostile' recce at 127 miles with 27 plots passed to Fighter Sector....not bad for a new station.

The C.O. and Adjutant of 44 Radar Wing, F/Lt. Wadsley and F/Lt. Chilton, inspected the new station on the 26th. also, and another flight of Liberators was tracked out to 162 miles. Then on the 30th. another 'hostile' recce was located and tracked at 116 miles. All this made quite an eventful first month which ended quietly with a visit from a Radio Physics tech.man, Mr. Edwards, which was an indicator of many visits to come from the various technical men from the south.

November 1943.

A rather similar pattern continued in November - 4 single Liberators were tracked out to very good ranges on the 3rd, 12th., 23rd., and 29th. - there were visits from officers of varying importance at Radar Wing - the SAO, M.O.,

and the C.O. Mr. Edwards from Radiophysics was back again, and the Area Radar Officer and Filter Officer also visited. But the principal action took place on the 12th. when two waves of hostiles were tracked in from 90 miles and 141 miles, while at the same time 59 was instructed to track in one Liberator from 98 miles out - this took some 42 minutes. A total of 171 plots were passed by 59 Radar during these two exercises with 54 plots being on the hostiles.

F/Lt. Chilton, C.O. of 44 Radar Wing, was an important visitor on the 19th., and he returned again on the 24th., with Mr. Edwards; the Area Radar Officer and the Area Filter Officer also visiting before the month ended. The best range for this month was 147 miles. On strength were 41 men.

DECEMBER 1943.

Acting F/Lt. Grahame arrived at 59 Radar on the 4th. December to take over as Commanding Officer, this being effected the following day; but F/O Hughes continued as C.O. as F/Lt. Grahame was immediately recalled to Radar Wing on special duties for two weeks. Meanwhile F/O Jordon arrived to instal Mk III IFF.

On the 17th. the C.O. F/Lt. Grahame returned to the unit, and then an instructor delivered 4 days of Gas lectures and demonstrations. The month ended with yet another visit from F/Lt. Chilton. Evidently there were no special Christmas celebrations.

JANUARY 1944.

Early this month there was yet another succession of Officers from Radar Wing including the Commanding Officer, The Medical Officer and the ex-C.O. of 59 Radar. Afterwards came more visiting Officers from Area Headquarters, the end result being a daily dose of Physical and Rifle Training for all off-duty Personnel. Something must have displeased those visitors! Meanwhile the first results on the new Mk. III Interrogator/Responsor were being assessed.

On the 27th. the C.O. F/Lt. Grahame was admitted to 1 MRS and F/O Williams took over as relieving Commanding Officer.

FEBRUARY 1944.

F/Lt. Grahame returned from 1 MRS on the 2nd. February, and F/O Williams departed for Radar Wing.

On the 3rd., building operations commenced on the station's new Canteen and Store....there was always room for improvement at all Radar Station....and on the 5th. F/Lt. Chilton, the C.O. of Wing, made yet another of his many visits to 59. On the 14th., the unit's Rifle team decisively defeated the team from a near-by Army Unit with LAC Quirk's effort being outstanding. On the 17th. the P and RT schedule was varied to include a weekly swimming parade - no doubt a popular move for all at Lee Point after sweating at PT in the camp - and on the 28th. F/Lt. Grahame was unfortunately involved in a collision with a civilian vehicle with one civilian being injured. The units strength at the end of this month was 1 Officer, 32 men.

MARCH 1944.

F/Lt. Grahame was admitted to No. 7 Convalescent Depot on the 8th., then he was admitted to 1 MRS again on the 16th., and resulting from his absence from his station no doubt, F/O Hammer took over as C.O. on the 18th. His stay as C.O. lasted only to the end of the month though, and then F/Lt. Bogue arrived to assume command. During the month there was a succession of visiting Officers yet again, from Fighter Sector and Radar Wing.

APRIL 1944.

F/O Hammer handed over command to F/Lt. Bogue on the 2nd., and on the 6th. Army Majors Hogan and Smithers of Coastal Artillery called to assess the possible use of the giant Dover tower for Army spotting and reconnaissance purposes. (There was an observation post looking out to sea close to 59.) On the 7th. there were a few red faces around the camp....the PPI bearing indicator was 'on the blink' and a bearing of 50° was shown as 30° which caused Fighter Sector to issue a Red Air Raid Warning.

On the 9th. the voltage regulators were overhauled, and on the 10th. the unit Orderly Room took over and moved into their new quarters.

Over the next few days there was a succession of visitors, and F/Lt. Bogue relinquished command on the 22nd. so that he could proceed on posting to command 321 Radar at Yirrkala.

Meanwhile F/O Gathercole took over as Temporary C.O. On the same day Lieut/Colonel Forbes, C.O. Coastal Artillery and Lieut. Danvares climbed the tower to study the outlook. Their interest probably also stemmed from the Observation Posts and coastal gun emplacement close-by.

MAY 1944.

On the 1st. May, P/O Ramage. who was the Area P and RT Officer, visited the unit to discuss the proposed Sports Association in the Area. Then on the 10th. Dr. F.Bowen and Mr. Ilife from Sydney University visited 59 RS with F/Lt. Wadsley....their purpose was to select a site for research work. Then on the 18th. two RAAF Meteorological Officers were on the job at 59 seeking a suitable site for a Met. Station. This was eventually set up close to the tower and Dover.

On the 22nd. and 23rd., two groups from 43 Squadron of Catalinas were on hand to be shown how the radar operated. 59 was having a busy time.

Finally, work was in hand to alter the kitchen arrangements - the stove was placed outside and a new concrete path was laid.

The station complement was 1 Officer and 30 men.

JUNE 1944.

The month began with another visit from Lieut/Colonel Forbes from Coastal Artillery Headquarters, accompanied by S/Ldr. Grout-Smith - his purpose this time was to select the site for a proposed gun emplacement, and another group of Officers - air crew probably - from 43 Squadron arrived to be shown over the station.

On the 13th. came one of those rare 'pats on the back' - a signal was received from No 1 Fighter Wing congratulating the station on its efforts in tracking an enemy recce. Then came another round of those important inspections before Captains Standish and Hunt from Coastal Artillery arrived to take measurements for a possible observation post. This visit in turn was followed by several RAAF Officers all making their various important inspections.

JULY 1944.

Little action was recorded in the Diary this month, but action of some sort was obviously 'in the wind,' for S/Ldr. Deakin, the Area Padre arrived with the SAO of Wing to check if 59 RS was receiving the required number of visits from the Padres. Perhaps it was no co-incidence that the Presbyterian Padre and the C of E Padre were at the station to conduct church services in the next couple of weeks. Other visitors this month included F/O W.Sanderson who inspected the layout of the technical installation, and W/O Harmer, the Radar NCO of 529 Squadron of the USA 380th. Heavy Bomber Group, who wished to make arrangements for aircrew to visit the Operations room.

Not a very eventful month!



THE 59 RADAR CRICKET TEAM - 22nd. August 1945.

Back Row. W.Harnath, -Herbertson, S.Verrall, M.Bull, and R. Taylor.

Centre. T.Watt, A Callinan, B.Philp and J. Scott.

Front. - Oberhart, W.Sheldon and J. Quinsee.



Maurice Carter and Len Presser stand by their tropical abode at Lee Point.

AUGUST 1944.

August turned out to be the Month of Visitors - for by arrangement, eight groups of aircrew visited 59 to view the gear in operation. There were 16 from the Dutch 18 Squadron, 27 from the American Heavy Bomber Group, and 8 from the Australian 43 Squadron. In addition, 2 Army Officers arrived and were up the tower again seeking the best position for an observation post, and two inspections were made by the Commanding Officer of Radar Wing, and by the Radar Medical Officer.

On the 25th August, S/Ldr. McDonald, the Defence Officer for RAAF Command, visited 59 to enquire about Defence Training for the Personnel. It's rather apparent that 59 RS was just a bit too close to Darwin and the various Headquarters were to be left to its own devices.

The unit strength at this time was 1 Officer and 32 men.

SEPTEMBER 1944.

There was quite a bit of action at 59 RS during this month, beginning from the first day when F/O Birch, Commanding Officer of the newly formed 351 Radar visited the station to arrange the inward move of his men and gear to set up at Lee Point. On the next day there were visiting officers from several units to watch jamming exercises on the technical gear; also 351 Radar, a detachment of 110 FCU, moved in as a Lodger Unit. Then on the 4th. F/Lt. Glover arrived to take over as C.O. of 59, with the actual change-over taking place on the 7th.

Three CSIR, or Radiophysics men - Messrs Eagles, Price and Iliffe, arrived on the 8th. to begin Meteorological exercises and surveys - then on the 12th. a group of American airmen from the US 530th. Bomber Group arrived to be clued up on a little of the Radar procedures.

There were some kite flights connected with Met. surveys on the 13th., Mr. Heffernan and Mr. McConnell were in charge of these, and then S/Ldr. Boyd and his party from 110 MFCU arrived the same day no doubt to check with the well-being of the men from 351 Radar.

Another group of American airmen arrived on the 18th. to watch both Radar stations in operation - then on the 22nd. the first meeting of the new Welfare Committee was held with seven keen members, and this was followed by a Comforts Parcel issue.

On the 24th., F/Lt. Maunsell, the C.O. of the Security Guards Unit and his Adjutant, F/O Hubbard, inspected the Guards Detachment. Unit strength was...59 RS.....1 - 23 and 7 attached.

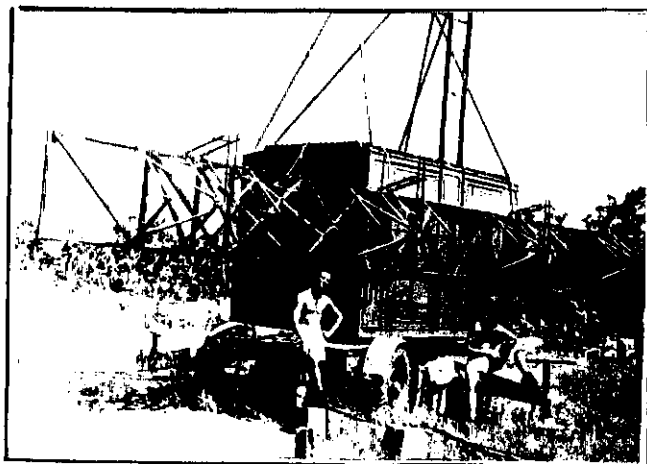
351 RS.....1 - 52

OCTOBER 1944.

October also proved a busy month beginning on the 6th. when Sgt Evans of 5 RIMU arrived to check the frequency of the Transformer...then cypher matters were discussed and the camouflage was checked.

On the 10th. a Maintenance Party from 105 FCU arrived (44 Radar Wing had closed down in August and Radar Control was now vested in 105 FCU) and Lt. MacGilcuddy and his party from the 4th. AA Control moved in for a 'rest.' Another innovation this day was a film show, arranged by Capt. McKie of 13th. Battalion...with another show on the 12th. And there was a big occasion on the 14th. when 59 and 351 combined cricket team played the 13th. Battalion. On the 17th. the Mechanics attended a lecture at 162 RS down at Knuckkeys Lagoon; and on the 20th. another group of Americans were on the station to watch operations.

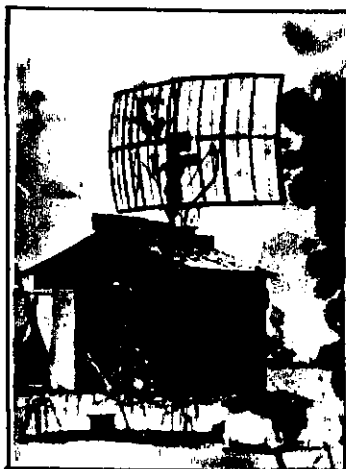
The Welfare Committee met again on the 24th., and three CSIR men, Mr. Eagles, and Drs. Pawrey and Brookes visited in connection with their study of Abnormal T.I. Propagation. Similar observations were being made over on Bathurst Island at 38 Radar.



(Top) Brian Tulloch and - Trezise 'on duty' at the ex-Army GL gear used to track the Met. balloons.

(Centre) The W/T operator on stand-by at his gear....though communication with 105 (ADHQ) was usually by phone or landline. His palatial shack was the envy of his mates who were housed in Army tents.

(Below) 257 RS the LW/LFC experimental gear, apparently located near Dripstone, though the men working on it 'lodged' at Lee Point.



The month ended with a 'fairly big brass' inspection - a Wing Commander and party - and yet another visit from an American airmen group.

NOVEMBER 1944.

The month began with an educational film shown at the station by arrangement with 43 Squadron - "The Battle of Russia" - which (probably thankfully) in turn was followed by a cricket match between the combined Radar team and 80 Wing Guard Regiment. Then on the 9th. the CSIR team investigating Temperature Inversion or Super Refraction was on the job again, followed by an IFF instructional flight.

There was another cricket match on the AWC grounds on the 12th. between the 59/351 team and 28 Air Stores...cricket was indeed the most popular sport for the men of the Radar stations. Then on the 16th. a new fish trap was constructed and brought into use. This was a very effective and popular way of varying the monotonous diet on stations and usually fed the 30 or 40 men.

Yet another cricket match on the 19th. down at Knuckeys Lagoon between the combined team and 132 Radar whose station was at the lagoon.

On the 22nd, the Radar Officer from the American 380 Bomber Group visited the unit to discuss the faults in the Liberators' response system - and the 43 Squadron Radar Officer and aircrews presented themselves for instructional purposes.

The Welfare Committee met again on the 24th., and on the 26th. the cricket team played the Security Guards team on the AWC grounds.

Finally on the 29th., the Area Filter Officer attended to discuss operational procedures - and to probably refine them.

DECEMBER 1944.

The station was a little quieter this month, but on the 14th., F/Lt. Weir arrived to take over command. F/Lt. Glover departed the next day.

On the 17th. the cricket team fronted up to the mighty RAAF Darwin and it should have been a walkover for the giant air base. Unfortunately no results have been recorded for any of these contests.

On the 19th. S/Idr. Squires from the Met. Section investigated super refraction - Lee Point obviously was sited in a critical location to experience this phenomenon.

351 Radar the lodger unit departed for Sattler on the 20th. Sattler was where 110 MFCU was located and soon to depart for Morotai.

On the 22nd. and 23rd. LAC Stead, Fitter, was on the job attending to the diesels - then on the 24th. there were special Christmas Services for all Personnel, Catholic and Protestant.

At the end of the month there were 34 men still at the station.

JANUARY 1945.

The New Year began with some entertainment very unique for a Radar Station.... the very popular Squadronaires Concert Party staged a performance at 59 and without doubt the audience would have come from near and far. Then on the 9th. Mr. Reid and Sgt. Golder of the CSIR visited, seeking the co-operation of 59 RS in their research on Super Refraction. F/Lt. Johnson, a Met. Officer, next called on the 14th. to discuss the effects of the weather on the performance of the gear.

On the 23rd. a new W/T antenna system was erected by F/O Morton and his party from the Signals Office at ADHQ as 105 FCU was now known.

F/Lt. A. Williams also assumed command on the same day.

But the big news for the month was the commencement of a fortnightly picture show on the station, brought by a mobile unit from NWA H/Q Welfare.

The month ended with another visit by Mr. Reid and Sgt. Golder to explain their programme of studying the weather effects on Radar performance.

FEBRUARY 1945.

S/Ldr. O'Hara visited 59 on the 1st. to discuss the apparent inefficiency of the BL4 and to record tracks showing IFF, also to examine the Polar diagrams of the BL4 and the Radar gear. Then on the 10th. and 12th. jamming tests were carried out by 'Section 22' and were demonstrated to the Radar staff. (These tests were probably related to those which later caused 'alerts' down the W.A.coast.)

Mr. Read and Mr. Ryan of CSIR also visited to arrange the method of recording the data on Super Refraction, its cause and effect. And on the 26th. S/Ldr. O'Hara and F/Lt. Scott from ADHQ were at the station to discuss and test the performance of the BL4 and the IFF response.

MARCH 1945.

There were reports and warnings of a Jap Recce over the area, but apparently plots indicated that it was over the Batchelor area, then it moved out over Anson Bay....59 had no sighting or plot at all.

F/Lt. Scott, the Radar Officer from ADHQ was back again on the 14th. checking the BL4; and on the 15th. F/O Gowing arrived to take command of 59RS. This was actually effected on the 20th. Then came a series of inspections from ADHQ Officers - equipment - hygiene - technical gear until at the end of the month the men enjoyed a film show when the Mobile Unit was at the station. A welcome change from inspections!
At this time there were 30 men on the unit.

APRIL 1945.

The month began with more inspections - then on the 11th. a pre-amplifier was fitted. On the 14th. a 5 RIMU party investigated the possibility of installing ASV.

On the 18th. F/O Ward arrived to take over as C.O. and this came about on the 21st. But the new C.O. evidently was not in the best of health and was taken in at IMRS for observation. A relieving man - F/O Lightly - took over while he was away.

W/O Frazer, a Radar Mechanic from 5 RIMU came to stay for a few days on the 26th, and W/O Scadden and Sgt Hardisty from an ADHQ Maintenance team arrived the following day, which suggests the equipment was due for a major adjustment of some sort.

MAY 1945.

The Commanding Officer, F/O Ward, was able to return to his unit on the 4th., and on the 5th. a party of Air Board Officers visited 59, duly escorted by F/Lt. Scott, the Radar Officer from ADHQ and F/Lt. Eyre from NWA H/Q. The Maintenance team departed on the 11th., and an IFF Test Flight was arranged for the 21st., with 3 Technical men from ADHQ on hand to observe results. There was a follow-up visit on the 25th.

After 28 days on the unit, W/O Frazer returned to 5 RIMU on the 28th, and the month ended with a church service and a hygiene inspection.! Cleansing both body and soul perhaps!

JUNE 1945.

A new incinerator was installed on the 5th., and the Hygiene Inspector and Radar M.O. visited over the next few days, with a follow-up later in the month which suggests the camp standards had slipped a bit below par. But the event of the month was the visit of the Area Radar Officer, S/Ldr Grout-Smith who was to choose a site for an experimental station with LFC gear (Low Flying Cover). The new station was to be known as 257 Radar.

Two Padres called at 59 on the last day of the month and held church services.

JULY 1945.

Two Officers from Area Headquarters were at the station on the 3rd. July, their reason being to 'observe operational procedures' Just how much they knew of Radar procedure might be a bit difficult to say. On the 10th. S/Ldr. Mitchell and F/Lt. Lewis from 5 RIMU inspected the proposed site for the experimental 257 RS with its LFC gear at Dripstone on the Casuarina coast. Then on the 12th there was a 'special' maintenance on the Receiver supervised by Sgt. Hardisty.

The station then proceeded along its regular routine until the last day of the month when S/Ldr. Grout-Smith and S/Ldr. Cornish arrived to inspect the site for the GL II set, which was to be used as a Met. station.

AUGUST 1945.

A suitable site for the Met. station having been selected and then inspected by the Army Operators of the GL equipment, the installation and setting up commenced on the 9th., and the preparatory testing and lining up was completed so that operation could commence the next day.

Meanwhile, S/Ldr. Glastonbury, an Education Officer, accompanied by two other Officers, was at the station to address the men on 'Rehabilitation.' Obviously the end of the war was in sight.

The GL Met. gear was tried and proved satisfactory on the 13th, then on the 15th. the end of hostilities was announced and Padre Robinson held a Thanksgiving Service at the station. Probably a 2 day stand-down was then held, with picnics, beach parties and social celebrations, this being authorised by ADHQ and was the norm at all Radar stations.

F/O Denis Banks arrived on the 16th. to take-over as C.O. - and on the 20th. F/Lt. Brigden and W/O Hughes arrived to take charge of the Meteorological observations at the GL gear.

On the 22nd. the men at the 'Rest Camp' were warned about indiscriminate and careless shooting, and a party from 5 RIMU called concerning the possible installation of a LORAN Monitoring station.

SEPTEMBER 1945.

There were bush-fires close to the station this month, but the 59 RS men were able to control them, and a pre-amplifier, designed and installed by Sgt. Appleby, was checked and inspected by the ADHQ Radar Officer. The 'always popular' ACF Hampers were handed out to all Personnel on the 15th; then on the 21st. a Life Saving class of eight formed up to receive instruction from LAC Wade.

On the 27th. F/O Jackman and his party moved to the nearby Radar Research Unit (probably 257 Radar) and became dependent on 59 RS for meals. Then on the 28th. S/Ldr O'Hara brought 9 ex-POW's from the DUNTROON to be shown over 59 RS. These men had been Radar Personnel in Singapore prior to their capture, and they showed keen interest in the technical equipment.

Diary entries now become less, but there is a note that on the 14th. October, 4 men received Life Saving Bronze Medallions.....Cpl Nesbitt, IAC Eve, LAC Ford, and F/O Banks.

Then follow a few immediate 'post war' notes from that transition period when all service personnel were thinking of home, discharge, and post-war life:

October saw a number of visitors at 59 RS and the Met. station...the proposed LORAN station was the reason for some of these visits.


The Commanding Officer, F/O Banks departed on the 19th. and Sgt. Appleby became the NCO In Charge.

On the 26th. the site chosen for the experimental 257 RS was approved and prepared, and a party arrived on the 30th. to instal the new type of gear near Dripstone, west along the Casuarina coast from Lee Point.

November began with Air Force Malaria Control checking up on the myriads of mosquitoes in the vicinity of Lee Point, and on the 6th. they were able to report that the local mossie population was non dangerous. On the 8th. Education Officer F/Lt. Williams was in attendance with an invitation for 59 RS men to attend the 85 Wing picture show....also to discuss any post war matters of concern. On the 16th. he was back to advise on Demobilisation and Rehabilitation. Finally on November 24th., Sgt. Giraud took over as NCO In Charge when Sgt. Appleby was posted south for discharge.

The story of 59 Radar ends with a copy of an advertisement from a Darwin newspaper, 1947 vintage.....

Tenders



COMMONWEALTH DISPOSALS COMMISSION, T E N D E R S

**CLOSING 2 p.m. Friday, 28th
November, 1947, will be received at the Office of the Commonwealth Disposals Commission, Smith Street, Darwin, N.T., for the Purchase of the following:—**

**1 Prefabricated Lattice Steel
Tower, 140ft. High, located
at Old No. 59 R.A.A.F. Radar
Installation, Lee Point Road,
Darwin Area.**

(Schedule P.690)

**Full Particulars and Tender
Forms are obtainable from
the Commonwealth Disposals
Commission, Smith Street,
Darwin, N.T.**

59 RADAR, PERSONNEL.

Commanding Officers.

20/10/43.	F/O J.B.Hughes.	23/1/45.	F/Lt A.Williams.
4/12/43.	F/Lt. D.Grahame.	20/3/45	F/O J.P.Gowing.
18/3/44.	F/O C.Hammer.	21/4/45.	F/O G.J.Ward.
2/4/44.	F/LtG.Bogue.	20/8/45.	F/O A.D.Banks.
3/9/44.	F/Lt A.J.Glover.		
12/44.	F/Lt J.S.Weir.		

Sgts. Appleby and Giraud then continued as NCO's-in-charge until the station closed.

W/O.	Frazer.	I.
F/Sgt.	Andrews	R.B.
Sgt	Hardisty	S.
"	Burgess.	
"	Sinclair	C.
"	Walsh	
"	Appleby	
"	Simpson	R.
"	Giraud	
"	Johnson	(RAF)
"	Waldron	C.(RAF)

The list of men below comprises names from memories, photos, diaries and the like. No POR's exist which are the unit record of names. This list is therefore incomplete.

Asche	A.
Burge	S.
Dennison	A.
Harms	M.
Hingston	V.
Stark	A.
Sutherland	M.
Carter	M.
Kelly	R.
McKenzie	K.
Wade	E.
Hick	A.
Harris	R.
Leith	I.
Verrall	S.
Scott	J.
House	A.
Bone	J.
Johnston	C.
Tyler	G.
Schmidt	R.
Beckley	T.
Isaac	L.
Shaw	D.
Hutchinson	C.
Johnson	C.
Bird	K.
Maiden	K.
Dodson	S.
Deignian	J.
McQueen	F.
Ackerley	J.
Baker	M.

Petrie	W.
Bates	-
Lyons	J.
Kelly	J.
Davidson	J.
Jones	R.
Nesbitt	R.
Eve	J.
Ford	W
Cunningham	R.
Taylor	R.
Quirk	-
Watt	T.
Callinan	A.
Harnath	W.
Herbertson	-
Verrall	S.
Bull	-
Philp	-
Oberhart	-
Shelton	-
Quinsee	-
Trezise	-
Tulloch	B.
Presser	L.
Crisp	P.
Lillyman	J.
King	P.
Wilson	G.
Harrison	J.
Lynch	-
Slee	-
James	D.
Stubbs	F.
Denning	D.
Gins	C.



"Happy Hour" for pre-dinner appetisers.



The Met. balloons were inflated, then tracked by the ex-Army GI gear.



"Gabby" the Cook and friend outside the Mess and kitchen.



"Short back and sides, please, and not too much off the top."

MEMORIES OF 59 AT LEE POINT.

Stan Burge.

March 1945. It was time to say 'Good-bye' to 60 Radar. The lugger was waiting - it was blowing a gale and the seas were high. The sail was raised and we were off with the wind and down through the Narrows of Apsley Strait. But it didn't last long before the motor was started.

Next morning we went ashore to look around the Bathurst Mission until the Anson arrived and we were loaded on. After lift-off from the Bathurst strip, the Anson made quick time to the main RAAF Base in Darwin about 50 odd miles across the water. After being unloaded. I waited on the strip and eventually a truck arrived and we were soon on our way travelling to the east of the base along a very rough and dusty road. In less than half an hour, we turned into a camp area of mainly tents and a few buildings scattered through sparse, stunted timber and grass about 5 ft. tall. This was 59 Radar, - my home for the next three months.

After signing on I was assigned to a tent which was almost on the roadside. The tent had two wood pole beds and was raised with galvanised iron sides. The closeness of the road proved a big disadvantage, particularly at weekends when most of the Darwin garrison seemed to be going to the Lee Point Beach, making it dusty and noisy. Another disadvantage was the fact that our pissoon was in full view and at times a truck of nurses would pass by on their way to the beach.

The Commanding Officer of 59 Radar was F/Lt. Jim Gowing (Gowing Bros.) who had been my C.O. for a while at No. 17 Burrewarra Point, Moruya, and he was a really great person.

59 Radar was a 'one-off' special build. The equipment was Mk.V COL with the normal array mounted on a giant steel mast or tower about 120 ft. tall with a narrow steel access ladder reaching to the top.

The Operations Room was a hut contained within the legs of the tower, and it was quite a large room. On one side was a raised area on which the receiver was mounted. This was shaded from the main section where the plotting board and fighter sector phones were located. Another table had a jug and cups for brew making. 59 was a very busy station and it was often non-stop tracking, with plenty of visitors coming to watch the process.

I can remember when our planes mounted a big raid to the north - I think all of Darwin's top Brass came to watch. I can remember being very nervous while on the tube operating, with the VIP's all looking over my shoulders - and I dropped the telephone while on the plotting board.



F/Lt. Jim Gowing, C.O.



LEE POINT CRICKET.

(At Left) Spen Verrall shapes up at the crease, with Adrian Callinan the wicket keeper.



(Below) Intrepid hunters proceed cautiously as they prepare to enter the jungle: Adrian Callinan, Jock Nesbitt and Spen Verrall: Jim Scott and Spen Verrall at right.



(Below) On the Lee Point Beach in front of the Doover.
Tom Watt, Bob Cunningham and Jock Nesbitt.



A mile or so off-shore was a rocky section, and on occasions Spitfires would come screaming down from high altitude to practise strafing. A regular run of Dakota C47's would also come down from the north-east, possibly a transport run from New Guinea. I recall being asked to concentrate on one plane while on shift and going outside when it passed over low with one prop. feathered. Once on a night shift the phone rang with a request to try to get a bearing on a fire on the northern horizon. Guess who was elected to climb to the top of the tower over the motor box to the rear of the antenna to line it up at right angles to the glow on the horizon so that a bearing could be obtained? Left and right instructions were relayed to the operator until an accurate bearing was obtained. It was a bushfire on Melville Island. The worst part was coming down that narrow steel ladder in the dark.

A short distance from the Doover was a small building containing a meteorological group who used to release Radio Sonde balloons and track them. This was to obtain wind directions and speeds. There were plenty of wallabies around the camp, and soon after I arrived a huge buffalo was seen. The nearby creek, a swift-flowing tidal inlet is still called Buffalo Creek. I can remember a fishing trip to a large water-hole, and throwing in hand grenades in an attempt to stun the fish. We had little success, but the plug from a grenade did stir the ground at my feet. Then an A.W.C. group arrived with a few sticks of gelignite and got heaps of fish. There were huge crocodiles to be seen in the beach area, and one day I saw a croc that had been shot and skinned - it was about 10 feet long. We spent a lot of time at the beach and we used to dive into the swift flowing creek to be carried along with the rushing tide. And after having seen only one movie on Melville Island in nine months, it was great being able to see 2 or 3 a week as well as occasional stage shows, even though occasionally the sound was obliterated by returning aircraft. Often Americans would turn up in the camp looking for beer, and being a non-drinker, I was able to do a few deals. For a number of years afterwards, I had a great pair of Yankee sun glasses.

The food at 59 Radar was good except there was very little butter, and there seemed to be nothing but Marmalade Jam which I didn't care for. A bad thingthere were mosquitoes and sand-flies in their millions. This really made life unpleasant, and we tried burning leaves without much effect. A short distance away from the camp the road became swampy in the wet weather, and our truck was always being called on to pull someone out of the bog which made our DM's non too happy.

V.E. day arrived, and a service was held on the station. I had arrived at 59 in March, and in July I received my posting south to Point Cook. After waiting for a few days at the RAAF Base, I boarded a C47 for a two day trip to Melbourne and then home.

RETURN TO LEE POINT.

Stan Burge.

In September 1991 I arranged a return visit to the Territory, and prior to leaving wrote to the C.O. of 2 CRU asking if it were possible to have an inspection of the station then on the old 59 Radar site. He wrote back a welcoming letter, and said he was interested to get any possible information on the site of the previous station, and to phone on arrival. After settling down in my motel and hiring a car, I phoned and was invited to visit the following day.

I found a smart looking road and a directional sign saying 'Lee Point', and so I was on my way. No bumps....no dust, and nice homes on each side to start with before changing to more open land.

I found the station on the left with a drive in of a few hundred metres. The old 59 camp site on the right side was an up-market tourist site. (Are the sandflies still there I wondered) After parking and being vetted by the Guard, he rang the C.O.. I was invited in and the inspection began.

The station operated on the town power supply, with back-up alternators and a large battery supply. The site was slightly west of the old tower site. The system was down for maintenance so I was not able to see it in operation, but I was able to meet some of the operators who asked many questions about the way it was 50 years ago.

How things have changed. After 'Goodbyes' were said, I drove down to the beach, parked in the nice reserve and had a look around. The water was still half a mile out. Some things never change! I inspected Buffalo Creek, and on the way back to the motel, I stopped at Dripstone Caves and inspected the plaque at that historic site.

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A "SPECIAL" MEMORY OF LEE POINT.

Steve Hardisty.

I was only at Lee point for 3 months, but there is one story you might find amusing.....As Senior NCO, I was given the job of showing a group of AWAAS (about 12 girls) over the Doover. After this I asked them if they would like to see the nearby beach. It so happened that the area from the Doover down to the beach was covered in thick trees and undergrowth which ended suddenly at the beach..

Fortunately I was leading, and as soon as I hit the beach I saw dozens of men standing around stark naked and sunning themselves. I couldn't stop the girls in time. but with appropriate "OOHS" and "AAHS", they beat a hasty retreat back in among the trees. One very embarrassed Sergeant attempted to express regrets, but I'm sure it gave the girls something special to remember about Lee Point. As you probably know, the rise and fall in the tide at Darwin is about twenty feet, and as there had been talk of Portuguese Men-of-War, I hadn't bothered to go to the beach before. That was my explanation anyway!

Another story is that the track from our sleeping quarters to the Doover was very narrow and surrounded on both sides with thick foliage. One night at about midnight I was walking along this path when lightning struck and there was a giant flash. There on the path one step in front of me was a huge snake. I got one hell of a fright, but fortunately it must have got just as big a fright as me for it quickly slithered away.

About the only memory I have of the Doover is the very high aerial which I hoped I wouldn't have to climb as I don't like heights. Fortunately, I didn't have to.

Good Luck with your project!

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DIARY NOTES FROM 59 RADAR, LEE POINT, EAST OF DARWIN. Merv. Harms.

I was posted to this station on 3rd. May, 1944, the last Radar posting of my first 'tour' in the Darwin Area, and these notes are written with reference to a few scant Diary notes I made while at 59 Radar.

The camp area of the station was set across a road away from the Doover and consisted mainly of tents set amongst trees, with a few buildings constructed of iron sheeting, they were the Orderly Room, the cookhouse and the Mess. A small area of one of the buildings was used as a Canteen. I had charge of the Canteen for a period during my posting at 59, and I opened it at my convenience. Regular weekly trips were made by the MT Driver to the Army Canteen Supplies Store near Darwin.

The water supply was also the responsibility of the MT Driver, who used a special 2nd. truck with two water tanks permanently on board for transporting the camp water supply from a mains area near Darwin. The water was then pumped into an overhead tank, then fed by gravity to the kitchen and showers.

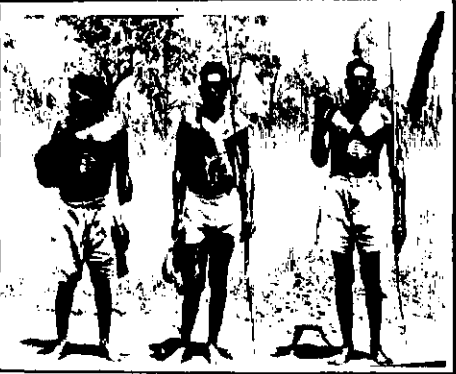
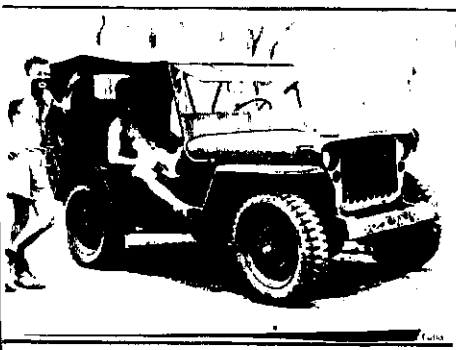
We had access to a good beach, and to get there we had a track through thick scrub. Bathers were not used, and this resulted in one very embarrassing encounter when out of nowhere, about six Army Sisters appeared from around a corner of the sand-hills -everyone went to ground face down. Also when not on duty, we were able to travel per truck to picture shows at the Aust. Army or American Army camps.

The Doover was a permanent Radar Station with a tower for the aerial over 100 ft. high. It was able to operate over a far greater distance than the mobile units situated along the coast or on off-shore islands. Power for the unit was by diesel motors, and it was the job of the Operators to crank the diesels by hand at change-over time....a most difficult job. All plotting information was sent per land-line to Fighter Control near Darwin, and so we did not have WT Operators while I was there.

My most exciting time while at 59 was on 13th. June 1944 whilst on the 4 a.m to 8 a.m. shift with co-operator Clem Gins and Mechanic Max Baker, when we plotted a single Japanese Recce approaching from a range of 130 miles at our estimated height of 33000 feet. The plane was intercepted by Spitfires after it had flown south to Fenton, then west to Peron Island. The Fenton Area was where the American Liberator Squadrons were based. It was shot down at 30000 feet, so our estimate was close to the mark. We received congratulations from Fighter Control for our work on that occasion.

My next most important happening at 59 was on the 8th. November when I was informed by the Commanding Officer, F/Lt. Glover, that my Home Leave posting had been received, and I had to report to 105 FCU at Darwin for clearances. Then it was home after 17 months in the Darwin Area.

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(Top left) Adrian Callinan, Tom Watt, Jim Scott and Spencer Verrall enjoy a 'Happy Hour.'

(Top right) Brian Tulloch and -Trezise check the C.O.'s transport.

(Centre left) Brian Tulloch with the camp cat, widely known as "Thomas TooBiggaBaggaBalls."

(Centre right.) Neighbours drop in.

(Below) "Gabby" the Cook with his kitchen friends.



UP ON THE TOWER.

Ray Kelly.

Unfortunately I cannot offer much help regarding 59 Radar station. From my records I was there from April 1945 until July..... about 10 weeks in all before I was posted to my last station, 61 Radar out on Peron Island. I think I have more memories of Darwin as it was then, than of the station. My only memory of the station personnel is of Bill Harnath, who shared a tent with me, and we still see each other around Anzac Day if I front up. I have vivid memories of how cold it was in that tent, in spite of the high daytime temperatures. I used to pile everything I could find on my bed to keep warm at night. As we were on a cliff right by the sea, and I cannot remember being cold on either Montalivet or Peron, maybe my memory is playing tricks on me, or maybe we had only a few such nights.

Regarding station buildings, layout etc, I just cannot remember. But I do remember that on top of the reputed 150 ft. high tower was a preamplifier for the receiver, two triodes in, I think, a grounded grid input, cathode follower output configuration, that looked like EF50's, but were not. I feel pretty sure the radar and aerial were COL Mk5. I would be unsure of the radar except that the station number, 59, confirms it. By the way, 61 Radar despite its number was LW/AW. It was planned to become COL Mk5, and some spare parts had been received for the changeover, but the end of the war meant that it was no longer needed.

I have checked my RAAF records showing the C.O.'s signature, and he apparently took as little notice of my doings as I did of his. Fair enough! Nobody during my war service reported my wrongdoings, but that would be fairly typical. Unless the crime squad caught you, you were O.K.

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CHRISTMAS AT LEE POINT.

Alan Stark.

I arrived at 59 Radar on 31st. October when the war was over and left again on 28th. December. During that time I was also attached to 257, the LW/LFC and spent time between the two. I was left in charge of the units from November until 28th. December when I left, and spent a lot of time in the Orderly Room and running back and forth to ADHQ. I was very concerned at that stage to have my demob. points corrected as they were incorrect, and I wanted to get home.

However, I do have some names of men who were there at the time, including the 59/257 combined crew:

"Blue" Lynch (Op)	Bruce Slee (M)	Jack Nesbitt (?)
Don James (?)	Frank Stubbs (M)	Ian Frazer (M)
Des Denning (?)	Jack Crisp (M)	Johnny Lyons (O)
"Spud" Bates (M)	Sgt.Giraud (O)	Bill Petrie (F/DMT)

Sgt. Johnson (English) was on 257, also Sgt. Charles Waldran RAF.

I cannot recall much about the tower except its height, also that I climbed it. It certainly was high, and offered a great view.

On 20th. December, Bill Petrie the F/DMT ran into a Liberator on Darwin strip, damaging the truck, and the plane's propeller also suffered! And I also recall that Bruce Slee was holding onto a clothesline on 10th. December when a lightning strike gave him a jolt. He was not injured, but only shocked. Officers from the LORAN unit served us Christmas lunch as we had no Officers on our unit at that stage. There was turkey, ham, salad, pudding and cream.

So Christmas proved quite a traditional feast!

Don Bartlett, a LORAN Flying Officer, brought his sister and her friend (I think they were Army) to the unit after dinner and we had a great time around the piano. I remember the girls provided us with snacks including asparagus wrapped in fresh bread (asparagus lilies?)....Anyway they were delicious! It was a very pleasant day.

Sorry I can't be of more assistance, Morrie. Perhaps you will receive better help from others.

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59 RADAR, LEE POINT.

Rod Harris.

I regret that my memories of Lee Point are extremely vague except for the thought that the array might possibly topple from that massive tower. I seem to remember that we picked up a surface echo from a ship at 75 miles which was something of a record at the time, but I have nothing but a fast failing memory to confirm it. However, I do remember regularly doing meteorological observations tracking the met. balloons using separate tracking gear which was located in close proximity to the 59 Dover/tower. Apart from that, I'm afraid I can't be of much help in your quest for more information.

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A BRIEF NOTE.

Ken McKenzie.

I'm afraid I'm a dead loss, because I remember very little about 59 RS at Lee Point, except going to the pictures in an open truck, and passing the C.C.C. camp on the way. I was at Lee Point from 7.4.45 to 2.6.45. Sorry to be so unhelpful.

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LIFE-SAVING WITH CROCODILES.

Denis Banks, (C.O. Aug.'45.)

I took over 59 Radar as Peace was declared in August 1945, and in September a young Operator, IAC Ev. Wade made it known that he was a qualified instructor with the RLSSA and would like to instruct a class in life-saving and present the candidates for the Bronze Medallion. About half a dozen of us expressed the desire to "Give it a go" and duly lined up for instruction. We practised various methods of freeing ourselves from the frantic clutches of a drowning person.

Near Lee Point is a mangrove banked tidal stream sometimes frequented by salt water crocodiles. When the tide was suitable, we were to practise the practical aspects of skills in this creek, but only after discouraging any lurking crocs with a well lobbed grenade. After several weeks of Ev's patient instruction, we were able to overcome a frightened swimmer, retrieve a brick from nine feet down in the muddy depths, and swim various distances on our backs etc.

By some unknown means, Ev was able to obtain the services of an RLSSA examiner to put us through our paces. He congratulated Ev. with 100% pass rate, and after returning south I received my Bronze Medallion...a Lee Point reminder which I still cherish.

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CHASING MOONBEAMS.

Denis Banks.

Probably in September 1945 while I was O/C 59 Radar at Lee Point, and at about 6 p.m. one evening when I was preparing to go on the truck to the pictures in Darwin, I received a call to go to the Ops room. On the tube was a display of the kind I had never seen before. It was also unknown to the Operators and the Mechanic on duty. After fifty four years my memory is perhaps not as clear as I would like, but as near as I can recall there were four or five vertical pulses like calibration pulses unsynchronised about an inch high drifting either way slowly across the screen. The bearing was approximately 270° and directly into the setting sun. This display lasted till just after sunset. Not only was this the evening sunset, but it was the occasion of the New Moon when the moon would be almost eclipsing the sun. I think the possibility of the echoes being echoes from the moon was discussed but not seriously.

I think it was in the 1950's the CSIRO published an article claiming to have pioneered radar reflections from the moon. I wrote to them about the echoes at 59 radar in 1945 and suggested they check the documentation from 59 RS. I never received a reply.

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THE MET. RADAR SITE.

Max Sutherland.

My three month stay at Lee Point was mostly spent on the Met.Radar - an ex- Army AA Radar which the RAAF set up.

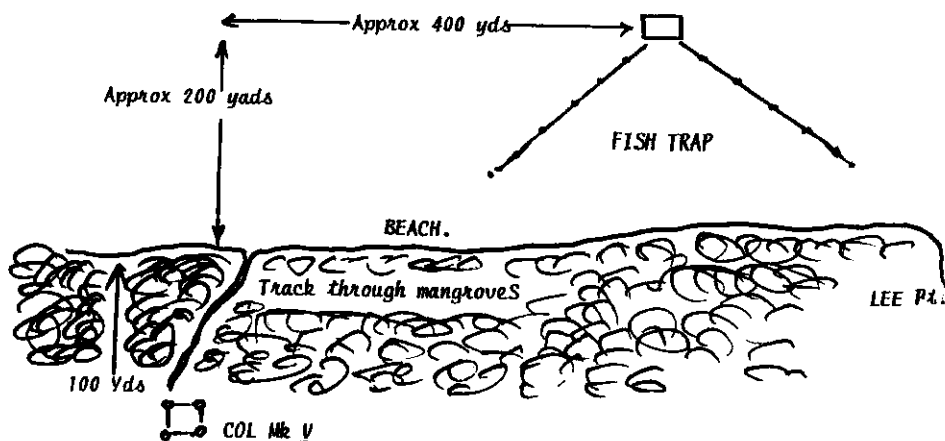
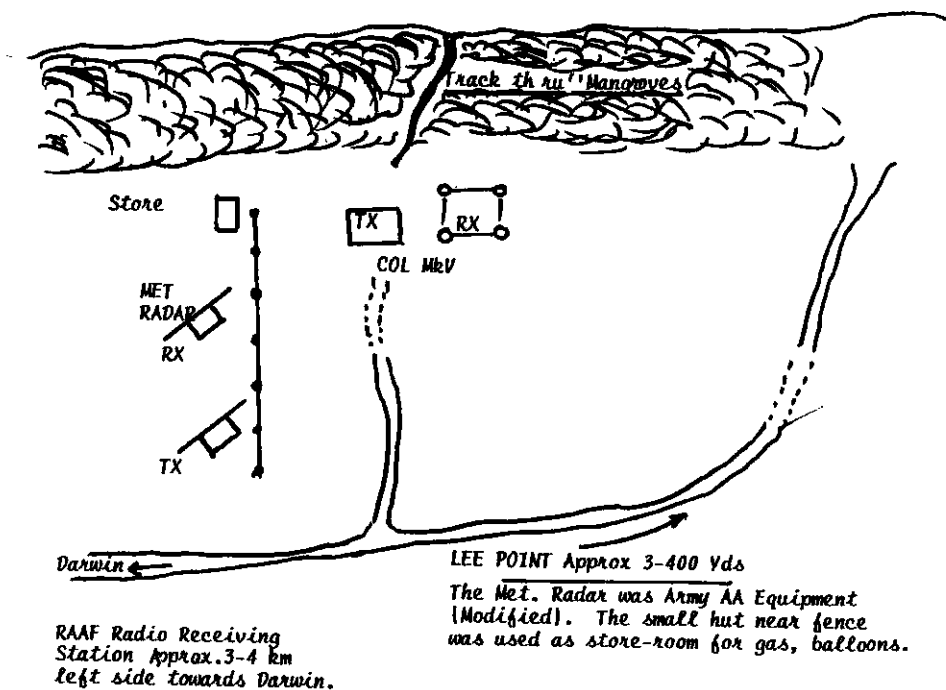
I cannot remember the high tower with the COL aerial on top. I have sketched a couple of views of the camp area and the giant fish trap which was several hundred yards along the beach from the radar site. This was effective because of the big variation in tides.

With reference to the Met. site.... there was a small hut just through the fence which held the balloons and the gas required to inflate them. The radar itself consisted of two cabins - a transmitter cabin and a receiver cabin. From memory, one of the operators had to follow the radar response, and the other operator kept his cabin on the bearing as relayed to him.

The display was made up of the cathode ray tube and two spinning discs - one green and the other red, and from this the operator was able to read the height of the balloon. The bearing and range was also passed and recorded. The trace was displayed in the vertical plane.

The COL MkV on 59 Radar from memory was built up as per the normal set up....that is, transmitter hut with cables across to the base of the tower where the receiver was housed in a hut in the base of the tower.

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TRACKING BALLOONS WITH THE GL GEAR.

Maurice Carter.

I was still stationed at 14 Radar on Wilson's Prom. when the Pacific War came to an end in August 1945. As seems to be normal in the Services, the 'system' was quite unable to cope with the rapid demobilisation of Personnel, and the next thing I knew I was posted to Darwin. Arriving at a Personnel Depot on the outskirts of Darwin, I tried to dodge as much as possible the lowly chores and jobs doled out to those who wait day after day for a posting that never seems to come. It was well known in the services that you could effectively bludge for hours while in a standing position, but never be caught sitting down or some zealous Sergeant would immediately find you a job of some sort, such as sweeping the ground free of leaves.

After about two weeks, a good deal of which was spent sleeping (as is easy in a tropical climate when not used to it) I found myself posted to a small unit at Lee Point, some miles out of Darwin. Here at 59 Radar, life was indeed pleasant, with very little to do except for a daily shift at a nearby antiquated gunlaying radar set which we used to track a balloon carrying reflective dipoles as high as possible in order to get some information on wind speed and direction at various heights for the information of the RAAF Darwin airbase. The equipment was so crude that our data must have been almost worthless, and I sincerely hope that no aircraft ever relied heavily upon it. Indeed, sometimes when we lost the blip of the ascending balloon rather too early for a respectable result, we would leave the cabin to look for the balloon by eye, and then fabricate a plot or two by dead reckoning (or estimation) rather than admit complete defeat.

The balloons for this exercise, and for flying the occasional 'radiosonde' transmitter, had to be filled with hydrogen, which was generated by us on the site in large cylinders. This was indeed a most hazardous occupation, and in retrospect, I marvel that nobody was ever killed, for we were utterly casual about the lack of safety surrounding the procedure. The heavy cylinders, probably several times the capacity of the large acetylene cylinders in use today, were supported on trunnions which enabled them to be turned completely upside down during the procedure of purging the remnants of the previous 'charge.' After this had been done, the contents of two small bags of iron filings (one bag of 'fine' and one of 'coarse') were poured into the cylinder, followed by a specified quantity of caustic soda flakes.

Then came the more interesting part of the procedure - the addition of a bucket of water in with the filings and soda flakes. The chemical reaction which followed the arrival of the water was instantaneous, and often violent and herein lay the skill, borne of experience, of rapidly inserting the steel bung into the neck of the cylinder and screwing it in sufficiently to secure it against the foaming volcano which followed. The gauge would register a pressure of 1000 psi. or more in just a few seconds.

Old hands who had taken part in this horrendous exercise many times would often try to increase the capacity of a 'charge' by doubling the ingredients. When this was done, you really had to be quick about getting in the bung as the volcanic reaction was immediate, very forceful and extremely spectacular.

Towards the end of that year, my father applied for my temporary release on special unpaid leave so that I might help with the grain harvest on the farm. This was granted and I was fortunate to leave Darwin at the right time for an interesting journey south.

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"Trixie," the camp mascot.



*Jock Nesbitt- highlighted
in the jungle.*



The bridge over Casuarina Creek.



Jock liked to live dangerously.



Negotiating the Lee Point jungle.



Peter King tries his new chair.

CHANGING TO THE MET. GEAR. (Diary Notes.) Ev. Wade.

30/7/1945. Eight of us - 3 from Adelaide River and 5 others - were transferred to an Army post at East Point for conversion courses to Army Gun Laying Radar. We were to complete the course and then take the gear to Lee Point to do Meteorological work for the RAAF. The GL equipment had been used by the Army for their Bofors AA guns.

We arrived at East Point to find the Army pulling down their camp and equipment with all the accompanying noise, confusion and general hub-bub all around us. They were naturally very happy and very boisterous, and who could blame them....but not the best conditions for us to study and learn, though.

Our introduction to the gear showed us that the Army boys did a lot more work than we did on shift, but we found it very interesting to use the Army Radar. Len Wilson, the instructor, was very keen and a very decent chap. 'Grouty' - (S/Ldr. Grout-Smith) had been a science teacher for Peter King and myself at Cessnock High School, and also my Athletics Coach. To us, he was 'Barney,' and he was a much loved teacher. When other RAAF and Army officers came out to see us, they were a bit put out to see the way Barney, Peter and I treated each other. Barney was our 'Barney' as he had been for 5 years, and he treated us like his younger brothers.

1/8/1945. We all went well and made no mistakes. Peter was 20 today. (Unfortunately Peter was accidentally killed not long before Wagga.)

2/8/1945. Just one illustration of our transport difficulties....I went on Sick Parade this morning and it took me 5 rides and 3 walks to get back to East Point. A good thing there was no flap on.

3/8/1945. Just a matter of getting used to the gear now and improving our operating, BUT...an exam tomorrow, though there's not much to do an exam on. We are putting up a balloon tomorrow.

4/8/1945. We still have not seen a balloon in the air, but now hope to do so on Monday.

5/8/1945. Censorship ends today. We went to Lee Point for a swim and the truck nearly turned over in the loose sand. It was very, very close.

6/8/1945. The Captain told us today we will be taking down the gear tomorrow. We put up two balloons this afternoon...the first we have seen in the air. The black one rose very quickly and disappeared at about 12000 feet, but the white one was still visible at 22000 feet. They gave quite large echoes for such small objects. It was very interesting to see the effects of the different winds. The test was this afternoon and proved very simple. I got 92.5% but another chap got 95%.

7/8/1945. We pulled the Doover down today and loaded everything preparatory to moving to Lee Point tomorrow and then erect it again.

AT LEE POINT.

Wednesday, 8th. August, 1945. We came along the new road out to Lee point which we found very rough. The Army had the GL Doover here, so we got to work and assembled it....and it WORKED. We had a look at the Met section which we found very interesting. The Atomic bomb appears to have done quite a bit of damage....(How ignorant was I?)

9/8/1945. As usual, it took 1½ hours to start to get our clearances at Orderly Room. Over half a day wasted to do 10 minutes work.

11/8/1945. The atomic bomb certainly worked...the camp is buzzing with the news of the developments in Japan.

13/8/1945. We had several flights today, and our readings were surprisingly accurate once we oriented the bearing. S/Ldr. Cornish told me I am to learn the maths for Met work on Wednesday. (As Maths has always been my best



PERSONNEL PARADE

(From left)

1. Jim Lillyman, on the day when the tennis court was finished. 2. Geoff Wilson. 3. Ev. Wade practising his Tarzan act, but no Jane sadly.



[Above.

Ev. Wade on the tennis court, put down with puddled ant-bed material.

[Above right]

Ev. Wade and Jim Lillyman at the front of their Lee Point home.

[Right]

Jack Crisp and Ev. Wade.



subject, I am very happy at the prospect..)

14/8/1945. We had two flights this morning....the balloons burst before starting. One balloon burst at 58000 feet, and one went to 76000 feet before bursting.

We've been put on normal shift with 59 Radar because of some jealousy about the amount of work the eight of us were doing compared with the rest...we only had our met work to do, which did not take very long. The re-arrangement meant I could no longer take the Met Maths work. I was not very happy because I was looking forward to it though it meant quite a few hours extra work each week. There was quite a bit of confusion over us because we could not do normal shifts at 59 and still do our met work, so now everyone will do both jobs.

A FEW EXTRA NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE.

We used to go to Darwin to the Pictures. On the way home, we could save quite a few miles if we cut straight across the main strip at RAAF Darwin. Unfortunately the Liberators were always using the strip to take off at the same time as we wanted to go across. They would take off at about one minute intervals which seemed MUCH, MUCH shorter.

We used to park on the edge of the strip with the motor roaring, ready to go as soon as the Lib we were using as our starter went past. Then away we went, hell for leather, hoping, praying and yelling..."Go-Go-Go! Don't Stop!" as the lights of the next Lib started to loom up. Fortunately, the planes were fairly slow in accelerating.

We got some frights, but next time there we were, ready to go again.

One night going home from the pictures there was a great thump and the truck slewed around. We were not very complimentary to the driver...I forget his name....and when we investigated we found we had run over a python, the biggest snake I ever saw in the wild. Someone stepped him out and said sixteen feet. Could he have been correct?

Out at Lee Point, the boys made a tennis court out of mud and ants' nest material, I think. We had to roll the water to the court in drums and puddle the mixture.

When Jim, Peter and I put up our tent, all the camp cats and dogs moved in. Even George, the pet cockatoo was there and got into Peter's peanuts. George doesn't like me because I won't let him have MY chair when I want it. Talk about noisy protests!

The beach is only about 1/2 mile away, and although very hot during the day, we got a cool sea breeze at night.

10th. August. We heard the news of the Jap willingness to surrender, at 9.20 tonight. A bit of shouting, but otherwise very quiet. On 15th., we were given an extra ration of beer and went to Mindil Beach with about 5000 other servicemen. NO WOMEN, for their safety. Quite a night.

A Canadian radio listening post was just up the road. Errol Williams, from Manitoba, came and joined the life-saving classes.

#####

138201

LAC. Burge. J.

Group 655

RAAF. Darwin

13-4-45

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS HOME.
 Stan Burge.

Hello Mum

.....So you have been seeing quite a few pictures lately. I'm pleased to hear it. Yes! The 'theatre' up this way is well worth seeing. I'm sure that you would be amused. The show we go to in Darwin is not a bad one. Seats, wooden ones without backs are provided, and the screen is large. It is of course, open air, and is just by the roadside. By the time the show commences, the parking area is packed with conveyances of all descriptions. Trucks big and small, jeeps and cars are all lined up in rows. When the show is over, there is one hectic rush for the trucks. M.P.'s control the traffic and move each row off separately. We also go to a local show, a mile or so away. The audience is usually only about forty, and we sit around on wooden chairs, stools and fuel drums. The screen is rather small, and the projector is mounted in the back of a truck. Most of the boys are at the show tonight, but I'm on shift at midnight.

.....Did I tell you I had moved into another tent? I am now with one of the boys who did the trip up with me. The tent is well laid out, and contains three tables, two lockers (of sorts) and two beds. At the moment the tent is alive with crickets. They get into the lockers, on the tables, and it is nothing to climb into bed and find you have the company of about half a dozen of the little so-and -so's. Mosquitoes and sandflies are still about, and we certainly know it. And the nights are becoming very cool. Yesterday morning I woke about four and had to put on socks and pyjama coat to get warm. The rain seems to have gone now and the days are grand.

....More news about the sandflies I mentioned earlier. A few moments ago I lit a fire outside the tent and dropped some green leaves on it. The smoke cleared the tent of sandflies and now threatens to drive me out too! Last night I went to the pictures and saw 'Suspicion,' starring Cary Grant and Joan Fontaine. It is an old picture but a good one. I saw it in Sydney years ago. The trip to the pictures is much more pleasant now as the A.W.C. have repaired the roads. Of course the dust is still as bad. Speaking of dust, I'll have to let the tent flaps down as tomorrow is Sunday. I'm afraid I won't get much sleep after dogwatch as the passing trucks usually make a terrific din.

....Well, not a great deal has happened since I last wrote. I have seen a

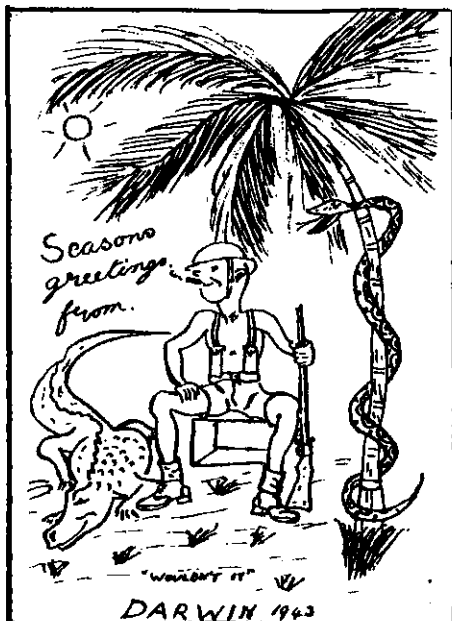
few pictures, the best of which was 'Gaslight,' starring Ingrid Bergman and Charles Boyer. I believe 'Gaslight' is showing in Sydney at present. Each week here one pre-release film is shown, as well as numerous old ones. Last night I saw a picture called 'Love Crazy' starring Myrna Loy and William Powell. It was a fair show and provided plenty of laughs. During the screening the projector broke down about three times, as well as having to change reels. At the picture show in Darwin they have two projectors, and the show is usually uninterrupted. After sitting on a board, under the stars watching the shows, it's going to seem strange lounging back in a theatre, but I dare say I'll be able to stand it! Yesterday I had to go on the usual weekly firewood trip in the afternoon. Firewood is no trouble here. We just drive out into the bush and fill the truck in no time, seldom having to use the axe. At last we are getting some fresh butter. For the past few days we have been getting enough for two pieces of bread, per day. I am told that eggs are 'on' for breakfast in the morning, so I'll be out of bed as soon as the gong goes. A new cook arrived yesterday, and so far has put on much better meals than the previous one, so you can see, things are looking up.

....I just heard about the death of Mr. Curtin. He had been sick for some time, hadn't he? I suppose Mr. Forde will take over now. Thanks a lot for getting the cake on its way. I'll be waiting for it.

....Well, Mum, that seems to be about all for the present, so I'll sign off hoping to hear from you again very shortly.

Love to all,

Stan.



PEACE COMES TO 59 RADAR AT LEE POINT.

Jim Scott.

My time at 59 Radar began in mid-April 1945 when I returned from 317 Radar accompanied by Bob Cunningham. We had both spent about seven months on Sir Graham Moore Island, and were looking forward to the sophisticated delights of Darwin and to operating a COL radar which we knew something about in theory, but on which we had no experience.

At first, we both found our work on operating the big COL disappointing. At 317 there was the feeling of being 'out in front' of Truscott, and of the men there depending on our early and accurate plots, whereas that urgency was missing at 59 at that stage of the war. The LW/AW was also more 'hands-on' in more ways than one, and the Operator shared pride in its efficiency with all station hands.

Radar still being a secret thing, and maps not available other than the one on the plotting table, we cherished the idea that we would be in Darwin itself, and might be able to pop down to the local store or drop in to the pub. However, 59 Radar was 20 km out, not far from the end of Lee Point Road where it met the beach and where the defensive pill boxes were located. There was a flat tray truck, presumably belonging to 59 Radar, which took groups of men to town and did all the transport and hauling for the station.

The tower which supported 59's aerial stood high above the trees and dominated the scene. As we lazed on the beach, we could see it turning smoothly or stopping and starting as it picked up a target. There were stories about the difficulties associated with its construction, and the alarm of two riggers or mechanics who clung to its frame as Japanese aircraft swept by on their way in to Darwin. How much truth there was in these stories we never discovered.

As time went by, we learnt the value of the station. We could easily understand that a U.S. Commander brought his pilots and navigators to 59 RS in the early days of its existence to hammer home to them the inaccuracy of their navigation on their return flights to RAAF Darwin.

There were certain periodic flights that we came to know and expect - mainly flights associated with the mail run and delivery of supplies to outlying stations. Also at about 1930 hours on one evening each week (was it Thursdays?) we tracked a small plane to the vicinity of Port Keats. "Black Jack is airborne" the Operator would say, "and heavily laden...he's only doing about 80 mph." His return, usually around midnight, but occasionally next morning, was also anticipated.

Spenn Verrall, Mechanic, and Bob Taylor, Operator, who had also been at 317, were already settled in at 59 when we arrived. They gave us the good news that it was one of the Territory's top postings, almost what would have been



Jim Scott on the 59 RS aerial.

called an R & R posting in later times. There was still the half day a week on camp fatigues - kitchen, latrines, wood gathering - but there was excellent provision for recreation with cricket, football, table tennis, handball etc. (we made the court by smashing up termite nests, spreading them and tamping down the wet surface). Books were available, and there was a good gramophone and a stack of records.

It was the height of the dry season with not a shark, crocodile, or stinger in sight. We took the well-worn track for half a kilometre through the scrub and jungle and came out at the mouth of Casuarina Creek for good diving at full tide. Otherwise we crossed the wide beach to sunbake, body surf, and compete in the "King of the Timor" which was a local contest of wrestling and strength in chest-deep water.

At least once each week the truck made a trip to the movies where it was compulsory to wear long sleeves, long trousers and gaiters. By this time malaria was practically non-existent in Darwin Area, but Medical Staff were insistent about correct clothing after sunset.

At the start of the movies in the large outdoor theatre, we stood for the National Anthem while photos of King George, Churchill and the U.S. President were shown. Then the patrons would shout..."What about Joe?" and the projectionist would respond immediately with the well known photo of Stalin. There was also another theatre where we could occasionally gain access - somewhere in Nightcliff.

Tents were the main form of accommodation, although the W/T Op. Jack Nesbitt, lived in relative grandeur in his W/T shack of galvanised iron. I guess the plotting table was in direct telephone contact with ADHQ, but the W/T had routine checks and emergency responsibilities.

Bob Cunningham and I shared the usual Army tent so there was plenty of room for a small table with boxes on their sides on top of each other to form rough locker units. Bob made himself unpopular at one stage by refusing to go on wood patrol after a Dogwatch. While a Sergeant was sorting out this disciplinary problem, it was noticed that Bob had the beginnings of a moustache. Had he asked permission? When had this faint down begun to take root? etc. etc.

The problem was solved by a self-appointed "committee of inquisition" suitably dressed in makeshift capes and hats, demanding that the offending growth be removed by a due date. Bob told them where to go and gave them similar instructions when they returned on the due date armed with shaving brush, soap and razor. In the struggle that ensued, Bob's bed collapsed, but the object of the committee - removal of half the moustache - had been achieved.

To his credit, Bob soon got over this tiff with his mates and concentrated on getting his gear ready for the big Airmen's Dance at ADHQ.* Our sole representative, he went in high hopes, but came away disappointed. "Jeez," he said, "It was all right for the women....they had four or five men queued up waiting for a dance!"

Soon after this time, two of us set off one morning to visit the RAAF Darwin and spend a day watching planes coming and going. Our second 'hitch' was on a truck with a boiling radiator and an animated driver who told us the war was over. We went straight back to camp, just in case important announcements were made.

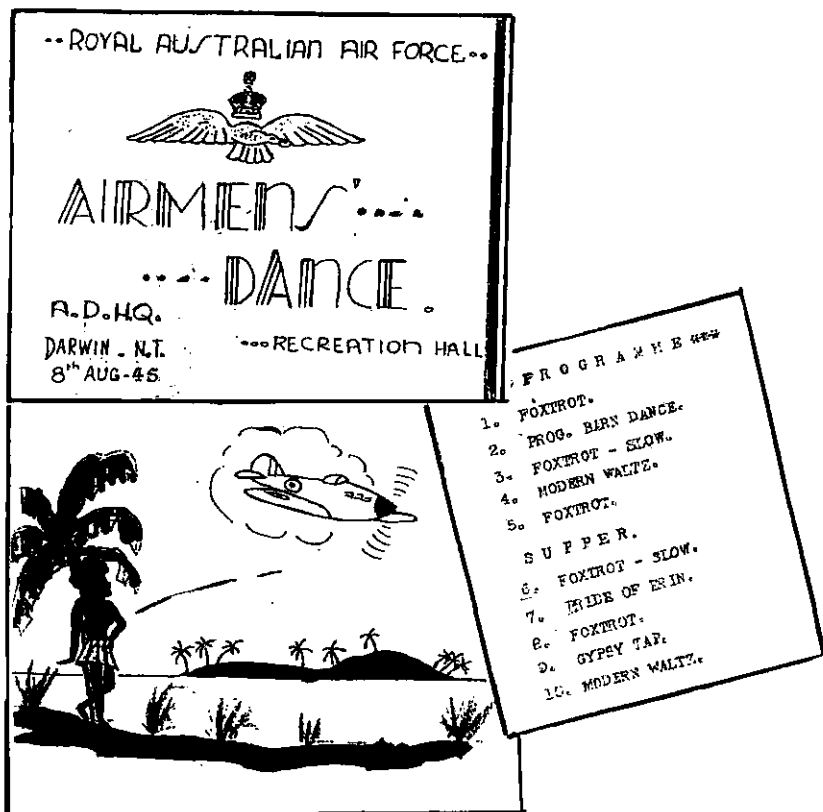
There were celebrations that night and the next, with a quiet day in between. On one of the nights, we went by truck to Mendil Beach where large numbers were welcoming the peace in raucous fashion. The star turn, a corroboree called "Poor Bugger Darwin," was put on by a local Aboriginal group.

The other night of celebration was put on at 59 and included the commandeering

of the facilities of the RAAF Met. Station which shared 59's site and facilities with us. Max Bull and his Met. mate were more than pleased to go along with the idea of sending a message via one of their five foot diameter balloons to the senior RAAF Officer, ADHQ. The message was short and to the point and reflected our new found freedom. Sadly, the winds were not favourable and it is highly likely that the balloon and its message have not yet been found.

You would have thought that those of us at 59 at this time would have been going south on our next posting....but No! Our next moves must have been in train before August 15th. as several postings came through almost immediately. Bob Cunningham and I found ourselves posted together again to 224 Radar, the ACD station down the highway, Bob for two months and I for one.

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* The Souvenir Programme of the Airmens' Dance at ADHQ, August 1945.

LEE POINT TODAY.

Morrie Fenton.

(With Selected Notes of Interest from the 2CRU Activities.)

At least two of the men who were at Lee Point during WW2 have returned and visited the place - Stan Burge in '91 and Maurice Carter in '99. From Dripstone, the Casuarina Coastal Reserve now stretches to Lee Point and the area is popular with both residents and visitors. A cairn and plaque marks the site of the historic 31 Radar - and although the Darwin suburbs have now spread to the vicinity of the coastal reserve, Lee Point itself and its beach have changed little in the intervening 50 odd years except that it is now accessed by a good bitumen road, and 2CRU was sited there some 40 years ago.

In September 1959, 2 Control and Reporting Unit was formed at Glenbrook NSW, and the Darwin Detachment formed 4 months later. The installation of height finding and search radar equipment commenced over the next few months at Lee Point, and 2CRU transferred to Darwin on 2nd. April 1960, with the new unit operating from, or very close to the old 59 Radar site at Lee Point. From this site over the years that followed, 2CRU was to build up and maintain its efficiency by taking its place and co-operating in the various military, RAAF, and squadron exercises which took place in the northern and western areas particularly. Considerable damage to the buildings and equipment was caused by Cyclone Tracy on 25th. December, 1974, and this resulted in the unit being forced off the air until 1982 when new equipment was eventually delivered. More damage was sustained early in 1990 when lightning struck the tower near the radar and much of the equipment and the power units were damaged. 2CRU held its first big 'Open Day' on 1st. October 1989 when families, guests and past members of the unit were able to inspect the various sections and installations. This occasion actually followed the 30th. Anniversary Celebration held the night before.

Then in April 1990, 2CRU assisted RAAF Darwin with its 50th. Anniversary Celebrations by taking part in a Freedom of the City march, and in the ceremonial Beating the Retreat that followed. Unit members also attended the Bombing of Darwin ceremony in February 1992 - 50 years after the actual raids when many WW2 veterans were in the city - and in August 1996, the Commanding Officer of 2CRU led a march of 350 RAAF personnel in another Darwin Freedom of the City march with 50 of the personnel being from 2CRU.

Less ceremonial were a couple of pleasant visits recorded in 1992. In July, John Bennett, a retired WW2 radar technician, visited the unit, and in November the C.O. of 2CRU called on the Honourable Justice Austin Asche, Chief Justice of the Northern Territory, who had been a radar operator at Bathurst Island, Montalivet Island and Lee Point during WW2. Austin had been appointed Administrator of the Northern Territory and was to take office in March 1993.

And in August that year, members of 2CRU left Darwin in a charity bike ride from Darwin to Alice Springs in aid of the RFDS - an occasion so very different to other recorded unit events, and so very worthwhile as a public relations exercise.

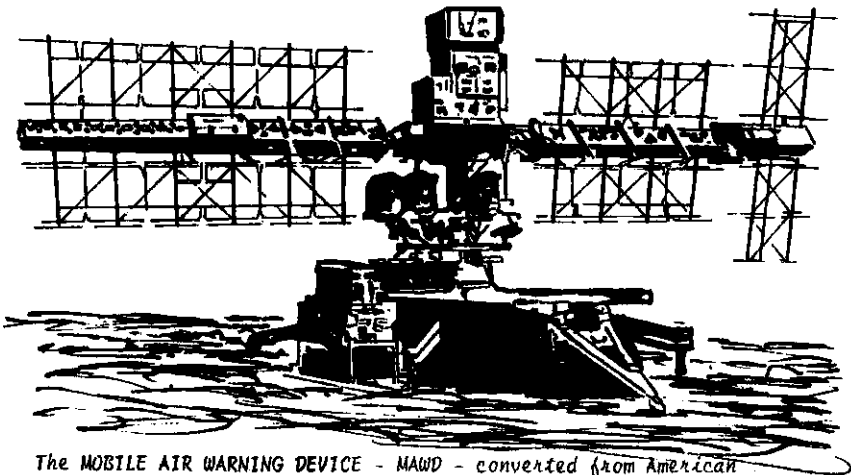
Additionally, the unit has co-operated with the Army and the Navy - and with RAAF Darwin, the big base unit so well known 50 years ago to WW2 veterans. 2CRU has also co-operated with the Australian Customs and with 1 Surveillance Unit at Alice Springs and their Jindalee Over the Horizon project. Other involvement has been with the big Tindal base, various RAAF Squadrons and Singapore Squadrons - and with US Marine aircraft units.

There has also been Naval involvement with units of the Australian and New Zealand Navies - and there has been deployment of personnel and equipment from ZCRU to Pt. Keats, Broome, Exmouth, Tindal, Daly River region and Lake Bennett to name a few.

ZCRU is now 40 years old and can boast a remarkable record of achievements, but more importantly it has become an integral and essential element within the Northern Australian Military Forces.....and it is great that it can perhaps be looked upon as a worthy successor to the 59 Radar which was on the site in '44 and '45.

Wing Commander Ward is the Commanding Officer of ZCRU in 1999.

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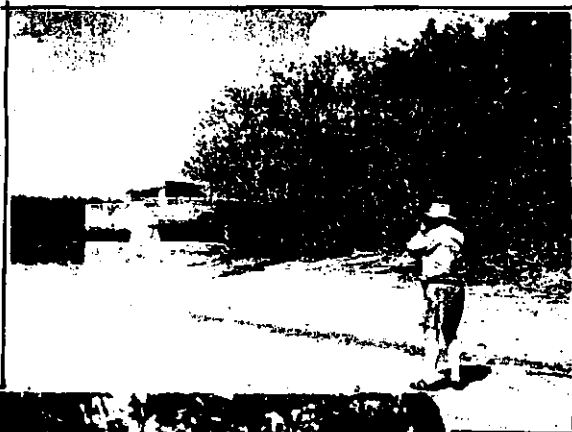


The MOBILE AIR WARNING DEVICE - MAWD - converted from American Gun laying gear, and installed in the NWA at 105 RS and 109 RS.

LEE POINT IN
RECENT YEARS.

*Stan Burge and Maurice
Carter visit their old
station site.*

1.



2.



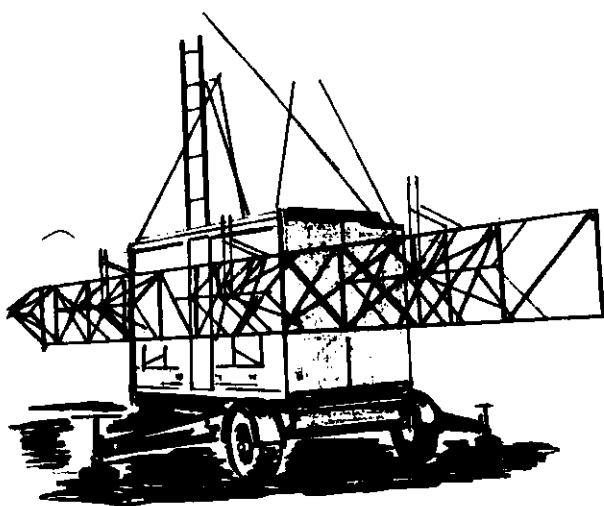
3.



1. Maurice Carter photographs the old observation post.
2. Stan Burge makes it through the L.P. jungle.
3. Lee Point at low tide.
4. The mouth of Buffalo Creek.....
It's still "Watch out for crocs!"

4.





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