

1119

FROM : Senior Administrative Staff Officer.
TO : Air Officer Commanding North Eastern Area, R.A.A.F.
DATE : 11 JAN. '43.
REF. : 19/53/AIR.

REPORT AND INTERVIEW RELATING TO R.A.A.F. PERSONNEL
ATTACHED TO 3RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP.

1. In accordance with your instruction that the incoming Senior Administrative Staff Officer, Wing Commander MAGFARLAN be conducted around the Area it is desired to inform you that the Senior Administrative Staff Officer and the incoming Appointee visited the CHARTERS TOWERS District.

- 2. The following Units were inspected -
 - 12 R.S.U.
 - 10 R.S.U.
 - 1 W.T.U.
 - Map Distributing Centre
 - 3 Replenishing Centre
 - 9 I.A.F.

In addition a call was made on the 3rd Bombardment Group, U.S.A.A.F. to introduce Wing Commander MAGFARLAN to the American Squadron Commanders on this strength and certain North Eastern Area aircrew personnel attached to that group for operational duties.

3. In addition to conditions described in the previous report dated 14/9/42 Ref. 19/53/AIR which still obtain, and although the new Group Commander, Colonel STRICKLAND, was absent his second in command Major IVANOFF was able to assure the Inspecting Officers that our personnel were still held in highest regard. Nevertheless the following recommendations are submitted and the action taken since the return to this Headquarters is set out hereunder -

(1) It is recommended

- a. That negotiations be conducted at the highest possible administrative level with a view to determining the future of this scheme. It will be remembered that originally we were asked to supply certain aircrew for approximately three months until the junior members of American Operational Aircrew could be obtained from United States. This had gradually been extended to nine months and there is still no end in view. Because of the day-to-day extension of this scheme a definite replacement policy has not, of course, been brought into being, and, until a definite decision is obtained concerning the duration of this proposed scheme, it will indeed be difficult properly to arrange a scheme of replacement and utilisation in the best interests both of the two Services concerned and also in the best interest of the personnel concerned.
- b. Notwithstanding recommendation (a) above it is recommended that the under mentioned aircrew members be withdrawn from the Third Bombardment Group, replaced if necessary (dependent on the decision obtained in recommendation (a) above) and posted to R.A.A.F. Units. This is deemed necessary because more than a whisper was obtained at other R.A.A.F. Units in the CHARTERS TOWERS vicinity that these personnel were under the impression that they are to stay there until they are killed in action. (Indeed it was this whisper that sent inspecting officers over to 3rd Bombardment Group with a view to testing the validity or otherwise of the rumour) -

| | | |
|-----|------------------|----------|
| P/O | K.C. CUTHBERTSON | (405298) |
| P/O | R.J. FERGIE | (405779) |
| P/O | D.S. PATRAGON | (406982) |
| P/O | A.J. UNDERWOOD | (3888) |
| P/O | R.A. JAMES | (408611) |

| | | |
|--------|-------------|------|
| 400477 | W/O BACKE, | J.G. |
| 408059 | W/O SCORBY, | J.T. |
| 408919 | SGT DONALD, | D.M. |
| 408643 | SGT BUCHAN, | H.T. |

| | | | |
|--------|----------------|------|-------------------------|
| 405313 | SGT ALLAN, | E.H. | |
| 405671 | SGT SLACK, | Y.W. | |
| 405732 | SGT GRAHAM, | J.C. | (Missing believed safe) |
| 405665 | SGT HOMES, | H.A. | |
| 411340 | SGT JACOBS, | L.W. | |
| 411229 | SGT JONES, | R.F. | |
| 406507 | SGT PATTERSON, | W.J. | |
| 408952 | SGT PARSONS, | R.H. | |

Flying Officer OCKENDEN, the Operations Room Officer (of whom more later) has supplied the following figures which represent R.A.A.F. Aircrew attached to 3rd Bombardment Group killed or reported missing since 11th May 1942 -

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Air Gunners | 33% |
| Pilots | 27% |

These figures are very high and it could well be realized that with lack of companionship and atmosphere of men of their own nation and Service, the dropping out from their midst of one or two at a time would have a far greater shock effect on these personnel than the same event would have in a whole R.A.A.F. Unit. This Area is now unable to perform the withdrawal of these personnel because of the 3rd Bombardment Group has now moved to MORESBY and because the personnel concerned must now be transferred by B.P.S.O. again from North Eastern Area Headquarters to 9 Ops. Headquarters. Thus it is necessary to invoke a higher authority for inter-area posting.

- c. It is strongly recommended that No. 408059, Warrant Officer SCUNDY, J. who has been employed in the Group as a second pilot since the 24th May, 1942, be commissioned. This warrant Officer is a very good type, has won the admiration of his American Senior Officers for his sturdiness in battle, his excellent leadership, and, generally speaking, is of ideal calibre for a commission. He should be posted now to an appointment where he can take up the responsibilities of a Captain of aircraft, R.A.A.F.
- d. It is recommended that, if the scheme is to continue, a better organisation should be evolved in order to get better control of such personnel from the R.A.A.F. point of view. At present, for example, there is no responsible officer to whom orders of common R.A.A.F. interest (i.e. Weekly Orders, A.B.O.'s A., "N" Orders, "F" Orders, etc.) can be sent for distribution to these people. As a result they gradually feel that they are being left out of the R.A.A.F. picture, and since this is the Service in which they will spend the bulk of their campaign it is highly desirable

4. There has however, been no communication concerning such re-organisation which is now more necessary than ever. This latter statement arises from the fact that the Americans have now dropped our Operational system and we have withdrawn the Operations Officer, Flying Officer OCKENDEN from the Group. This officer previously acted in an unofficial capacity as the "father of the flock" handling communications with this Headquarters, casualty notifications, arranging leave, clothing issues etc., and generally performed the duties of a detached commander. (for your information Flying Officer OCKENDEN is going to BOWEN on posting). This officer is well worth bringing to your notice for the very excellent and dignified way in which he has conducted himself and performed his duties in the presence of the Americans. But his withdrawal will mean that we are without even this unofficial arrangement for control and liaison with R.A.A.F. personnel in the Group.

5. It is desired to inform you Sir, that this day, the 11th of January, the Senior Administrative Staff Officer telephoned the Air Member for Personnel to put recommendation (a) more fully, and to stress its urgency. The Air Member for Personnel drew attention to a recent request from No. 1 B.P.S.O. for a further

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Thirty or forty Air Crew members for this Group . He asked if these were to be regarded as replacement personnel or additional personnel. Air Board signal PZ.184 of 16th JANUARY has now directed that nearly all of the R.A.A.F. personnel named above are to be relieved as soon as the replacements arrive.

6. Other matters of interest arising from the inspection of other units will be brought to your notice by verbal report, or if deemed necessary by further written report.

B.P. McFarlane

for Wing Commander,
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OFFICER.