

A10 American Air Corps - RAAF Personnel
Serving In
FROM : Senior Administrative Staff Officer
TO : Officer Commanding R.A.A.F. Allied Air Headquarters,
North Eastern Area. 1121
DATE : 14 SEP 1942 *3rd & 22nd Bombardment Groups*
REF : 19/53/1110

REPORT ON INSPECTION OF R.A.A.F. PERSONNEL ATTACHED
TO THIRD BOMBARDMENT GROUP.

1. The Senior Administrative Staff Officer, Wing Commander A.G. GRANT, and the Staff Officer Personnel, proceeded to Charters Towers to interview and inspect R.A.A.F. personnel attached to 3rd Bomb Group U.S.A.A.F.
2. The itinerary was as follows:-
Departed TOWNSVILLE by car at 0610 hours.
Arrived at CHARTERS TOWERS at 0810 hours. Reported to the Group Commander COLONEL J. DAVIES, U.S.A.A.F. and commenced to interview personnel of the 90th Squadron 0910 hours. 13th Squadron at 1310 hours. Departed CHARTERS TOWERS at 1730 hours. Arrived TOWNSVILLE 2000 hours.
3. With the exception of two or three non-commissioned officers who were, at the time, in the air, all the personnel were individually interviewed, their numbers and personal records checked and their conduct, bearing and appearance inspected.
4. Details of R.A.A.F. Casualties brought to notice during the visit were checked by Staff Officer Personnel and were, in some cases, found to vary slightly from the accounts in North Eastern Area records. The personnel concerned are divided into Wireless Air Gunners, Pilots, and Observers and will be reported on under those headings.
5. Each man was asked how he liked his present appointment, whether he was satisfied with the treatment he had received, whether food and quarters were satisfactory, and if he had any complaints. From these questions and observations a composite picture was constructed in the three Categories described.
6. Common to all categories were the dis-satisfaction with the taxation position, the delay in promotion, and the milk dislike of the food. (American cooking is different to ours, and in addition mutton is not eaten at all by American troops). These were disposed of by explanation and clarification. A more serious complaint universally expressed was that R.A.A.F. .38 Ammunition supplied for Smith & Wesson revolvers contravened the Geneva Convention and rendered the holder liable to instant execution on capture. (Whether this is so or not, is a matter for expert opinion, but arrangements were made with the Group Commander concerned, COLONEL DAVIES, who promised to issue American .45 Colts with nickel plated ammunition.

7. WIRELESS AIR GUNNERS

This Group had won for themselves and for the R.A.A.F. the admiration and praise of their Squadron Commanders (Who could not speak too highly of them) and of their Group Commander who made the statement that the R.A.A.F. Wireless Air Gunners in his Group were more efficient than their American opposite numbers. He would be very loath to lose these R.A.A.F. Wireless Air gunners. On the other hand the men themselves do not want to leave their present appointments. They had averaged sixty (60) hours since their arrival in the Squadron four (4) months ago.

8. PILOTS

This Group was not quite so satisfied, having in common with the gunners a strong sense of injustice in respect to taxation, a mild dislike of American cooking and the same attitude towards Smith & Wesson .38 ammunition.

They liked their appointments and they had averaged fifty (50) hours since their arrival at the Squadron some four (4) months previously.

They had an extra complaint over and above the Gunner Group and this was that there was no provision made for them to become Captains of aircraft. They were naturally anxious to have the opportunity of advancing in their profession as pilots. This was discussed with the two Squadron Commanders and Group Commander. All three officers were loud in their praise of the standard, skill and determination in action shown by these second pilots as well as by the W.A.Gs.

They agreed that the pilots concerned were ready for conversion to Captains Courses, but had no authority to allow U.S. aircraft to be Captained by R.A.A.F. personnel in action.

Indeed as Colonel DAVIES pointed out the arrangement whereby these personnel were loaned to the U.S.A.A.F. was originally a temporary expedient of an anticipated duration of approximately six months until aircrew personnel could be obtained from America. These not having arrived, it is obvious that the present arrangement may be extended even to twelve months.

In the meantime the Group Commander has no U.S. personnel coming on and Captain wastage through casualties is gradually reducing his availability.

From Captains he would normally expect to obtain his Flight Commanders and Squadron Commanders so he also is seeking a clear cut direction as to the status of R.A.A.F. pilots as Captains in his organisation.

This will be the subject of a recommendation later on in this report.

9. OBSERVERS.

This Group was wholly dis-satisfied and had every reason to be so. To the minor grievances held in common with the W.A.Gs and pilots (strange food, promotion and taxation), they added a very major complaint which was lack of flying and consequently, unemployment. Their flying times are set out hereunder, and it will be seen that some of them have not flown at all in the three or four months service they have had with the Group. The highest figure is fifteen hours for four months shown against the name of Sgt. WELLS, C.H.

403236 SGT. COPE, W.A.,	7½ hours	401600 SGT. FIELD, N.	2 Hours
408182 SGT. GREY, S.W.	2½ hours	401651 SGT. MARSHAL, J	Nil
402902 SGT. PRIME, L.A.	Nil	406607 SGT. SMITH, C.C	4½ hours
408154 SGT. TURNER, A.R	5 hours	401604 SGT. YOUNG, E.A.	5 "
411297 SGT. COLEMAN, E.G.	4 "	408151 SGT. IKIN, C.A.	9½ "
406026 SGT. LORIMER, A.K	7 "	401314 SGT. MCCARTHY, J.W	12 "
401524 SGT. MOORHOUSE, A	10 "	401555 SGT. WELLS, C.H.	15 "
401075 SGT. MURPHY, F.H.	9 hrs 20 mins		

This is wholly unsatisfactory. The cause is easy to find. The make-up of the crew of a B.25 Squadron (with which the Squadrons of this Group are armed), is in the U.S.A.A.F. as follows :-

Pilot, Co-Pilot, and W.A.G.

There is no provision at all for an observer as the co-pilot does the navigating. Hence these W.C.O.s have not been used in combat missions. They have however been used (for such flying times as are shown) during seaward searches and reconnaissances. However the range of this aircraft (600 miles) is such that this type of employment is rare. The observers have been given all sorts of employment except flying. Realizing that they just don't fit in with B.25 crew the Squadron Commanders have given them guard duties and other duties. Lately to keep them fully occupied they have given them some time on the Norden bombsight, with a view of using them as bombardiers.

Generally speaking they were a very dis-satisfied group indeed, and this dissatisfaction is easily understood. They are losing way amongst R.A.A.F. observers through lack of flying.

10. OTHER R.A.A.F. PERSONNEL.

An operations officer (P/O. OCKENDEN) and a cypher officer who are also on the strength are older officers but both of junior rank. They have done most valuable work in controlling the aircrew R.A.A.F. personnel and generally in studying their interests, guiding them, handling administration, arranging their clothing, leave and entertainment etc. In this connection P/O. OCKENDEN is deserving of the highest praise. His work was also highly praised by Colonel DAVIES and he has conducted himself in such a way as to bring nothing but credit upon the R.A.A.F. in the eyes of our Allies.

A recommendation will be submitted in respect to proper control of R.A.A.F. aircrew by one of these older non-flying officers.

11. To sum up; the R.A.A.F. personnel in this Group were found to be highly esteemed by the senior officers and indeed by the whole of the Americans. The gunners were confident in their ability to fight the Zero off from their formations (and have proved it on more than one occasion), were looking for more fighting and generally were on their toes. The skill of the pilots reflected credit on their training and they too, were on their toes. The observers have been discussed above. The other officers also won great respect and praise from those concerned.

All were found to be well conducted and courteous; as neatly turned out as their wardrobes could provide, clean and shaven, and generally speaking all of good average service standard.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) With the concurrence of the Squadron Commanders and the Group Commander it is recommended that all observers be withdrawn from this Group and employed in R.A.A.F. units where an observer is an integral part of a flying team.

(b) It is recommended that the second pilots should be replaced by junior pilots to enable the present N.C.s to proceed to Australian Squadrons, for conversion to Captains Courses. In order not to interfere with the Group's efficiency in action, it is recommended that this be a gradual process, that is ; replacements should be by ones and twos as against the total immediate withdrawal of all observers. This gradual replacement is necessary since this Group is engaged continually in operations against the enemy.

(c) It is recommended that the A.M.P. ask Air Board vigorously to oppose taxation of flying pay. This is an enormity really, and this Headquarters had no knowledge that flying pay was being subject to such huge deductions (47%) for taxation purposes. Moreover it is anomalous that Squadrons, fighting in New Guinea continually, but striking from Australia should be taxed at all when other personnel doing no fighting, are excused taxation, merely because they are based outside the continent. A.M.P. personally knows the record of this Group over BURMA, KOKODA, LAE and SALAMAU, and the losses sustained both by Americans and Australian personnel in actual battle.

(d) It is recommended that, in view of the semi-permanent nature of the attachment (there is apparently no prospect of them being replaced by American personnel), they be put on a sounder organisational and administrative basis. This therefore suggests that R.A.A.F. personnel, posted, assigned, or attached to an American group should be formed properly into units under such title (as a suggestion) as "No. 1. Attached Aircrew Unit" (for 3rd Bomb. Group) "No. 2 Attached Aircrew Unit" (for 2nd Bomb. Group) and so on.

Establishments should be drawn up on a sliding scale and the unit should automatically be placed under the command of the senior R.A.A.F. officer (posted or attached to the Group) for purely R.A.A.F. matters. This would be a much better arrangement than the present nebulous set-up and is regarded at this Headquarters as an important suggestion.

(e) It is recommended that Greatcoats in addition to blue tropical capes be issued to personnel located at Charters Towers, where the temperature on the plateau falls rapidly at night.

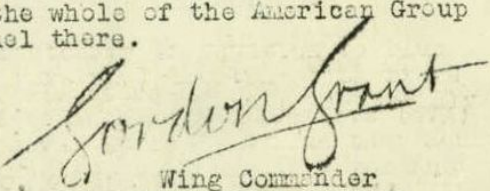
(f) It is recommended that No. 408182 SGT. GREY, S.W., and No. 402902 SGT. PRIME, L.A. be granted Commissions. These two Observers seem to be gifted with powers of good leadership. GREY has a B.A. degree from the University of TASMANIA.

(g) It is recommended that the following, other than observers, be posted to Australian Squadrons for good private reasons, communicated, to the inspecting officers:-

400286 F/SGT. DAWSON, F.H.
411233 SERGT. SIDDALL, J.H.
401925 SERGT. DUNN, L.N.

13. It is considered that the inspection was of value both to this Headquarters, to the R.A.A.F. personnel concerned, to the American Group Commander and Squadron Commanders, and to inter-Allied co-operation generally.

14. It is desired to bring to your notice the very great courtesy extended by Colonel J. DAVIES (Commander of the 3rd Bomb. GROUP) Captain GERRITY (90th Squadron) and Captain EVANOFF (Commanding 13th Squadron) in that Group. All these officers have the admiration, respect and affection of the R.A.A.F. personnel serving within their commands, and the whole of the American Group were highly spoken of by our personnel there.


Wing Commander
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OFFICER.