

AA File, Series A 571/2, Item 42/944, NEI Squadrons in Australia, War Cabinet minute, 12 June 1945.

- There is a lot of back and forth about who should pay for Australian ground staff supporting NEI air squadrons in S.W.P.A during 1942-43
- Move of NEI/Dutch air squadron from Canberra to Bundaberg:

**SECRET**

File No. 151/2/803. WAR CABINET AGENDUM NO. 226/1945.

COPY NO. 12

PROPOSED TRANSFER OF DUTCH SQUADRON FROM R.A.A.F. AERODROME, CANBERRA.

Introduction.

1. As recorded in Minute No. (4071), reference was made at War Cabinet meeting on 27th February, 1945, to the increasing importance of the R.A.A.F. Aerodrome at Canberra; further, to limit wear and tear on the aerodrome and congestion of air traffic owing to its use for training purposes, the question was raised as to the possibility of transferring the Dutch squadron to another area - the Minister for Air to report on such matter.

2. This Agendum embodies my report.

Alternative aerodrome selected for N.E.I. Air Force purposes.

3. After full investigation of aerodromes that could be made available for the purposes of the N.E.I. Air Force, Bundaberg (Queensland) Station has been selected as the most suitable.

4. The station at Bundaberg was used for No. 8 Service Flying Training School, R.A.A.F., which has closed down, the station being at present retained on a "Care and Maintenance" basis only and for the storage of aircraft which can be moved to another location. The accommodation and housing space is in every way suitable for the requirements of the N.E.I. Air Force, though, to meet requirements of B-25 aircraft, the runway will require to be extended and sealed, at an estimated cost of £20,000. That cost would be borne by the N.E.I. Government.

5. The N.E.I. authorities would be glad to be allotted Bundaberg Station as their main base, but would appreciate an assurance of continuous tenure until termination of hostilities. In the event of that aerodrome being made available for their purposes, they propose concentrating their Transport aircraft, as well as additional repair facilities, there.

Personnel aspects.

6. Should the Dutch Squadron be moved from Canberra to Bundaberg, the N.E.I. authorities would require the loan of 50 R.A.A.F. personnel (additional to those at present allocated to them at the former station) for station, etc., duties at present carried out by personnel on the R.A.A.F. Station establishment, that additional number being required temporarily only, pending arrival in Australia of Dutch Nationals who are expected to arrive in the near future.

Submission to War Cabinet.

7. The foregoing is submitted for consideration and decision by War Cabinet.

(Arthur S. Drakeford),  
MINISTER FOR AIR.

1st June, 1945.

(SW43/45)

National Archives of Australia NAA: A571, 1942/944

WAR CABINET MINUTE

**SECRET**

CANBERRA - 12th JUNE, 1945.

(4254) AGENDUM NO. 226/1945 - PROPOSED TRANSFER OF DUTCH SQUADRON FROM R.A.A.F. AERODROME, CANBERRA.

Note was taken of the report furnished by the Minister for Air in pursuance of Minute No. (4071) on the proposed transfer of the Dutch Squadron from the R.A.A.F. Aerodrome at Canberra. The following decisions were given on the proposals submitted:-

- (a) That Bundaberg Station, Queensland, be allotted to the N.E.I. authorities as their main base with an assurance of continuous tenure until the termination of hostilities, and that the Dutch Squadron at Canberra be transferred thereto;
- (b) That the runway at Bundaberg be extended and sealed at an estimated cost of £20,000, subject to -
  - (i) the cost of the work being borne by the N.E.I. authorities;
  - (ii) the allotment of a works priority by the Defence Committee;
- (c) That 50 R.A.A.F. personnel, additional to those already allocated, be loaned temporarily to the N.E.I. authorities, pending the arrival in Australia of Dutch nationals expected in the near future. The Department of Air is to keep this matter under review and arrange for the withdrawal of the R.A.A.F. personnel immediately Dutch nationals are available to replace them.

*Handwritten initials in red ink.*

*Handwritten signature of the Secretary.*

Secretary  
War Cabinet.

Proposal of additional NEI air force units: 1945-46

SECRET

Files Nos. 151/2/1141  
and 151/2/1142.

WAR CABINET AGENDUM NO. 252/1945.

COPY NO. 12

PROPOSED FORMATION OF ADDITIONAL AIR FORCE UNITS -  
ROYAL NETHERLANDS INDIES ARMY.

Introduction.

1. This Agendum relates to the proposal of the G.O.C. Royal Netherlands Indies Army to form in Australia an Air Transport Squadron and a Repair and Servicing Unit.

Existing N.E.I. units.

2. The N.E.I. Force in Australia at present comprises two squadrons (viz. No. 18 - equipped with Mitchell Medium Bombers, and No. 120 - equipped with Kittyhawk Fighters). These squadrons were formed within the framework of the R.A.A.F. and are supplied and maintained through R.A.A.F. organisations, all costs being met by the N.E.I. Government. The aircrew and the large majority of the ground staffs are Dutch Nationals, there being a small R.A.A.F. component in each unit.

3. Additionally, an N.E.I. Personnel and Equipment Pool is located at R.A.A.F. Station, Canberra, where reserve aircraft and equipment are held and operational and other training is carried out. A small R.A.A.F. personnel component has similarly been made available here, but the number of R.A.A.F. personnel provided for all N.E.I. purposes is considerably below the total of 700 as recommended in Agendum No. 77/1943 and approved by War Cabinet vide Minute No. (2656).

Proposed establishment of new units.

4. The G.O.C. Royal Netherlands Indies Army now proposes to form an Air Transport Squadron and a Repair and Servicing Unit for the following purposes -

(a) AIR TRANSPORT SQUADRON:

The N.E.I. Air Force has at present 16 C.47 (Dakota) Transport aircraft which are used mainly in connection with supply associated with the two squadrons, but the loading capacity of those machines is placed largely at the disposal of the R.A.A.F.

The G.O.C. R.N.I. Army considers the formation of the Transport Squadron will overcome certain administrative difficulties at present being experienced in the operation of those aircraft.

The unit is at present located at Archerfield, most of the personnel employed being Australian civilians who will be replaced as soon as possible by Dutch Nationals.

It is further proposed to locate the Transport Squadron at Bundaberg (Q'land.) which aerodrome is to be made available for use by the N.E.I. authorities.

/Page 2....

(SW46/45)

(b) REPAIR AND SERVICING UNIT:

The G.O.C. R.N.I. Army proposes to form this unit in 1946 for the purpose of maintaining, as far as practicable, N.E.I. units located in this theatre. This R.S.U. will be staffed by Dutch Nationals who it is expected will be available from Holland or the N.E.I., thus relieving Australian manpower, viz. R.A.A.F. and the civil aircraft industry in regard to certain work now performed by them.

If approved, it is proposed that this unit should also be located at Bundaberg which station has an excellent workshop, hangars, etc., enabling the carrying out of the necessary 80 hours' and 120 hours' overhauls, engine changes, etc., of all N.E.I. units.

Recommendation.

5. I recommend that War Cabinet approval be given to these proposals, subject to the conditions that no additional R.A.A.F. personnel will be required and, further, that R.A.A.F. personnel at present employed in existing N.E.I. units will be replaced by Dutch Nationals (as they become available), before allocation to any new N.E.I. unit.

(Arthur S. Drakeford),  
MINISTER FOR AIR.

14th June, 1945.

15 JUN 1945

(SW46/45)

42/944

7964/

The Treasurer.

Notes on War Cabinet Agendum No. 252/1945.  
Proposed Formation of Additional Air Force Units -  
Royal Netherlands Indies Army.

The following notes were received by telephone today from Mr. Watt, Melbourne.

Proposal.

1. The Agendum deals with a proposal of the G.O.C. of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army to form in Australia an Air Transport Squadron and a Repair and Servicing Unit.

It is proposed to form the Transport Squadron immediately and the Repair and Servicing Unit in 1946. Both units are to be stationed at Bundaberg, Queensland.

The aircraft for the Transport Unit are at present at Archerfield. Most of the personnel employed in connection with this unit are Australian civilians and are to be replaced as soon as possible by Dutch nationals.

N.E.I. Air Units already in Australia.

2. N.E.I. already have two operational squadrons in Australia in respect of which the R.A.A.F. has, with War Cabinet approval, supplied certain of the ground staff.

The maximum number of R.A.A.F. personnel to be made available was 700. The present Agendum states that the actual number is substantially less. The Dutch also have a personnel and equipment unit which was stationed at Canberra and is to be transferred shortly to Bundaberg.

Comment.

3. All financial commitments in connection with these squadrons are to be borne by the N.E.I.

The Agendum at paragraph 5 suggests the conditions which should be imposed in regard to manpower.

There is no Treasury objection to the proposal.

(sgd.) G.P.H. WATT

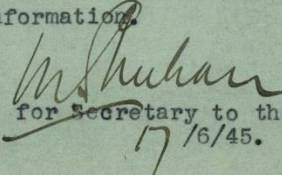
16th June, 1945.

The First Assistant Secretary,  
Defence Division,  
Department of the Treasury,  
Victoria Barracks,  
MELBOURNE, S.C.1.

and

The Assistant Secy.,  
(Special War Services),  
Trsy. Liaison Office  
Dept. Defence,  
Melbourne.

For information.

  
for Secretary to the Treasury.

17/6/45.

## NOTES ON WAR CABINET AGENDUM NO.294/1945

THE TREASURERAPPLICATION FOR PERMISSION FOR AUSTRALIAN CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS  
TO LEAVE AUSTRALIA WITH THE DUTCH AIR FORCE

There appears to be an absence of "tie-up" between this agendum and No.252/1945 submitted to War Cabinet on 15th June 1945 by the Minister for Air.

2. In the present submission the statement is made that Dutch Air Force Officers interviewed the Secretary, Department of the Interior, on 15th June and made a request for permission for certain civilian personnel, at present employed servicing Dutch transport planes in Brisbane, to proceed overseas with the Dutch Forces.

3. In the agendum submitted by Air (No.252/1945) and dated 14th June which deals with the transfer of Dutch Squadrons, it is stated that it is proposed to locate the Dutch transport squadron at Bundaberg (Queensland) and to transfer the present civilian personnel employed by the Dutch, from Brisbane to Bundaberg until such time as they can be replaced by Dutch nationals.

No mention is made in that agendum (which has not yet been considered by War Cabinet) of the Dutch authorities requiring civilian employees for service outside Australia.

4. It would appear to be desirable that the Dutch should make their own arrangements for ground staff for employment outside of Australia.

On the other hand, they have agreed to provide local labour and local materials for Australian Forces operating in N.E.I. territories without payment by the Commonwealth and in view of this gesture, which may assume substantial proportions as re-occupation of N.E.I. Territories proceeds, we should do what we can to assist them in their early difficulties.

The possibility of supplying the personnel from the R.A.A.F. on a temporary loan basis until Dutch nationals become available, might be explored.

Secretary,  
Department of the Treasury,  
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Referred for  
information.

First Assistant Secretary  
/7/1945

(G. P. N. Watt)

First Assistant Secretary

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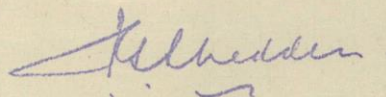
WAR CABINET MINUTE

CANBERRA - 11TH JULY, 1945.

(4318) AGENDUM NO. 294/1945 - APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION  
FOR AUSTRALIAN CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS TO LEAVE  
AUSTRALIA WITH THE DUTCH AIR FORCE.

The application by the Dutch authorities for permission for the Dutch Air Force to take outside Australia from 75 to 100 Australian civilian technicians, at present in their employ, was not approved.

2. The Director-General of Manpower is to keep the matter under review, with the object of terminating this manpower commitment as soon as operational requirements permit, and reallocating the men to high priority industry.



Secretary,  
War Cabinet.



Termination of Bundaberg project due to end of the war:

SECRET

SUPPLEMENT NO.1 TO WAR CABINET  
AGENDUM NO.226/1945.

File No.7/1/546.

COPY NO. 12

TRANSFER OF DUTCH SQUADRONS FROM R.A.A.F. AERODROME, CANIERRA.

Introduction.

1. In War Cabinet Agendum No.226/1945, it was recommended that the R.A.A.F. Station, Bundaberg, Queensland, be made available as the main base for the N.E.I. Air Pool and that the runway at that station be extended and sealed, at an estimated cost of £20,000, such costs to be recovered from the N.E.I. Government.

2. War Cabinet (as recorded in Minute No.(4254)) approved of those recommendations.

Works project now cancelled.

3. The G.O.C., R.N.I. Army, has now intimated that it is expected that, as the result of termination of hostilities in the Pacific, suitable and satisfactory airfields in the Netherlands East Indies will, in the near future, become available for occupation by the Dutch Air Force, under which circumstances there is now no need to proceed with the work of extending and sealing the runway at Bundaberg, which project may now be cancelled.

Recommendation.

4. I thus recommend that War Cabinet approval be given to the cancellation of the Authorisation Allotment of £20,000 granted for the extension and re-sealing of the runway and taxiways at Bundaberg aerodrome.

(Arthur S. Drakeford),  
MINISTER FOR AIR.

5th September, 1945.

6 - SEP 1945

(3W72/45)

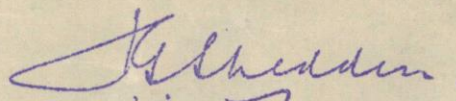
SECRET

WAR CABINET MINUTE

CANBERRA - 19th SEPTEMBER, 1945.

(4420) AGENDUM NO. 226/1945, SUPPLEMENT NO. 1 - TRANSFER OF  
DUTCH SQUADRONS FROM R.A.A.F. AERODROME, CANBERRA.

Approval was given for the cancellation of the authorisation allotment of £20,000 previously approved in Minute No. (4254) for the extension and re-sealing of the runway and taxiways at Bundaberg aerodrome.



Secretary  
War Cabinet.