

## Pearce Base 1993 Open Day



One of a number of parking areas to cater for the massive influx of visitors



Hangars provide a vast area for the indoor displays

## Pearce Open Day

The 1993 “Open Day” was an opportunity for the public of Western Australia to once again view the vast facilities of Australia’s Pilot Training Base, combined with an introduction to the presence of the Republic of Singapore Air Force Flying Training School.

Many thousands of people, along with a great number of ex RAAF personnel, Air Training Corps cadets, Naval Cadets and Army Cadets flocked to the Base on Sunday, 28 November 1993. There were many interesting static displays, while the opportunity to actually see an F111C from RAAF Amberley, a C130 Hercules from RAAF Richmond, and a Caribou on detachment from RAAF Amberley, proved to be most popular to both young and old.

Flying displays are always a highlight of any Open Day and the public was treated to a wide range of flying displays by Service Aircraft and Civilian Companies, using fixed wing and helicopters. Sports Association Aircraft and privately owned aircraft, together with glider and tug aircraft helped provide a non stop programme for over three hours. Aerobatic demonstrations by both Service and private individuals provided the thrills to the occasion.

Like the very first “Open Day” held on 28 May 1938, the public was well rewarded for their presence, and the enthusiastic commendations amply rewarded the RAAF Personnel of RAAF Pearce and other Bases for their enormous effort.

### RAAF Base Pearce Units

Headquarters  
Base Squadron  
No 2 Flying Training School  
No 25 (City of Perth) SQN  
No 38 Squadron  
Republic of Singapore Air Force

### Static Displays

Air Training corps  
Defence Force Job Link  
Air Flight, Catering  
Base Training Centre  
Video Training  
Field Deployment  
Royal Flying Doctor Service  
Photographic Facilities  
Aircraft Armaments  
RAAF Vehicles  
Aircraft Barrier  
25 SQN Display  
Casualty Staging  
Rosco McGlashen’s Jet Car  
Physical Training  
Atkins Carlyle  
Administration  
Communications  
Supply



With so many aircraft to inspect the visitors were frequently diverted to watch the never ending flying displays.



ATC vehicle, along with many other types of equipment, had the PAF and Reserve Personnel kept busy explaining the items and function.



RAAF Base Guard Dogs and their Handlers provided an impressive display of obedience and skills display.



Static displays reflected, not only the great diversity of equipment, but also the enormous effort that the Base Personnel had mustered to create and mount the informative exhibition.



Entering a Hercules and moving through the vast cargo area and then exiting through the large rear doors, appealed to a great number of visitors.



As was expected, the aircraft, open for inspection, proved to be very popular.

## **Specialist RAAF Animal Pets**

On many RAAF Bases pets were to be found and Pearce was no exception having two of the “flying types”.

No 25 Squadron was adopted by a Pink Galah, that suddenly appeared, took up residence, and readily accepted all, irrespective of rank. Daily, the Galah would parade the entire length of the hangar with a waddling walk, surveying the activities going on in a busy wartime Squadron. It welcomed the occasional offered hand and a ride on the shoulder of passing Ground Staff. After this morning routine and inspection the Galah would generally spend the remainder of the day on the Adjutant’s desk. Some industrious member of the Squadron made a forage cap for the Galah, who, from then onwards paraded with his cap.

After attending an RAAF funeral, one of the mourners accidentally backed a car over the Squadron’s pet Galah, killing it. In the spirit of the occasion, a coffin was constructed, a trailer acquired and a funeral organised. With due pomp and ceremony the casket, draped with the Australian Flag, and surmounted with the “forage cap,” was paraded around the Station. In due course the remains were buried with full military honours.

No whereabouts of the interment has been reported.

## **Air Traffic Control Budgerigar**

It appears that a certain Air Traffic Controller acquired a Budgerigar that he diligently taught to speak a whole host of defamatory aspersions about the parentage of a certain Senior Officer. The said, completely innocent bird took up residence in the Control Tower where it soon gained the friendship of all the duty ATC.

On Base Inspection Day, our over friendly Budgerigar flew onto the shoulder of the visiting officer and uttered the offensive language. The inspecting dignitary together with subdued sighs of relief by the Duty Staff expressed great hilarity.

It would appear that the RAAF does produce personnel with a rare gift of needle work for our Budgerigar was soon to be seen wearing a miniature flying helmet as worn by human species that also took to the air.

Evidence regarding a posting for the Budgerigar has not been located.



The

prestigious **Hawker Siddley Trophy**, awarded to the most efficient Support Unit in the RAAF, was won by the Base Squadron Pearce in 1994 and cheerfully accepted here by WGCDR Peter Leham, the Commanding Officer.



The **Air Force Association Trophy** is awarded annually to the most efficient RAAF Reserve Squadron. No 25 Squadron, Pearce, has won this award on a number of occasions.

## **Hawker Siddeley Trophy awarded to Base Squadron Pearce**

Base Squadron Pearce was rewarded, for efficiency measures implemented throughout 1993, with the “Hawker Siddeley Trophy,” a prestigious award made annually to the support Unit deemed by the Chief of the Air Staff, to be the most efficient in the Royal Australian Air Force.

The formal presentation of the Hawker Siddeley Trophy took place during a Ceremonial Parade at RAAF Pearce. SQNLDR Bernie Grealy, Chief Flying Instructor of No 2 Flying Training School, first treated invited guests to a display of aerobatics. This was then followed by a march by the Officers, Airmen and Airwomen of Base Squadron Pearce including the RAAF Police Dogs and their Handlers, accompanied by the RAAF Central Band. Overhead, PC9 aircraft of No 2 Flying Training School and Macchis of No 25 Squadron marked the occasion with a flypast in close formation.

The Reviewing Officer was Air Commodore Brendan O’Loughlin, Air Officer Commanding Training Command. Mr Richard Whiting, General Manager of Hawker Siddeley, presented WGCDCR Peter Lehman, the Commanding Officer of Base Squadron Pearce, with the Company’s Trophy.

The parade participants then marched off to celebrate the victory with their families and guests at an all ranks buffet lunch in the Airmen’s Mess.

The award also marked the end of an era for RAAF Base Squadron Pearce in its current form. Under a wide RAAF reorganisation of Support Units, No 306 Air Base Wing would replace Base Squadron Pearce.

**A fitting commendation for RAAF Base Pearce on the eve of the reorganisation.**

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### **RAAF Base Pearce again wins prestigious proficiency award.**

RAAF Base Pearce was the winner of the prestigious **2001 Hawker Siddeley Award**. The award, which is the highest accolade for a RAAF Base, was announced on **Tuesday 2 April 2002 in Canberra by the Chief of the Air Force, Air Marshal A.G. Houston, AM, AFC.**

The award is keenly sought by RAAF Bases as it signifies that the winning base is the most proficient RAAF Base over the calendar year.

In fact, RAAF Base Pearce boasts the honour of providing ‘best practice’ models for the rest of the RAAF in a number of areas including Energy Management, Environmental Management, and Safety and Emergency Management. Not only are standards high but the rate of effort by flying units at Pearce last year made Pearce the busiest RAAF Base in the country with around 160,000 aircraft movements.

This trophy was initially presented to the RAAF, in 1976 to commemorate the close association that the service has with the Hawker and de Havilland aircraft associations. It is a keenly contested award and RAAF Base Pearce is extremely proud to be the recipient for 2001.

## Daily life Style at RAAF Pearce

### Airmen's Mess

Perhaps in the historical perspective it seems significant of the Royal Australian Air Force have changed their lifestyle since the moment No 23 Squadron "Marched In" on the 10 March 1938.

The location of Bullsbrook, for the Station, was quite isolated with no Public Transport readily available. When the individual living quarters were completed for all ranks, there was some degree of elation at having a completely new facility in which they were the first occupants.

The Ground Staff were provided with an Airmen's Mess where, three times a day, excellent meals were prepared by competent catering staff. It must be remembered that Australia was still recovering from the disastrous depression, and to the newly recruited personnel the life at Pearce must have had a great impact. After the evening meal the Ground Staff could make use of the developing range of leisure time activities available in their mess.

Through an elected Mess Committee, with experience in the way a Mess should operate at other RAAF Bases, the affairs and development of facilities was handled under the guiding hand of Sergeant "Shorty" Machin, who was also in charge of catering.

Daily routine commenced with a Parade of all personnel, where special announcements were made as an effective communication style,. The "Troops" then marched off to their Sections, with their newly formed Band playing, to commence their daily tasks. Work commenced at 0800 hours and ended at 1600 hours. Weekends were free, except for those on duty. Personnel, going off the Station, could catch a Beam Company Bus at the Main Gate. WGCDR Brownell had negotiated with the Company to extend their service to Pearce. Men would be taken to Perth and delivered outside Government House in St George's Terrace. Perhaps this was a way of "showing the colours" and at the same time reminding "the troops" of their personal responsibility in regard to the Service. Uniforms were not usually worn off the Base in the pre-war period. In Perth, connections could be made with public trams or trains to reach other destinations. The return bus trip was usually late on Sunday night, but always reaching Pearce before 2359 hours.

Weekend sporting activities at Pearce gave personnel an opportunity to play cricket, football, rugby, tennis and to meet up with people in the surrounding districts.

Annual leave was then three weeks and LAC Phillip Mark (2108) well remembers a group of them exploring the South West in a private car on their first leave. Most of the Pearce personnel were from the Eastern States but car ownership was very rare.

On occasions the Mess was cleared and appropriately decorated and made ready for a dance organised by enterprising young airmen. How the girls arrived and where from appears a well kept secret. Many a young airman had their introduction to the game of billiards with the two newly installed tables. Christmas dinner was celebrated in the Airmen's Mess in the then traditional RAAF manner.

### **Airmen's Mess and Facilities 1994**

Some 100 rooms are now available for Ground Staff with 80 currently being occupied, as it is still expected that singled persons will live on the Base. Now that the RAAF also includes females, the Mess and all facilities are available to all. Meals are still prepared by Service personnel but it is likely Pearce may follow what is already occurring at a number of other Bases where civilian companies will provide this service.

It is a very large Mess, where on occasions a Ball (dance) is held with accompanying sumptuous catering provided. With personal private cars the norm, transport is no longer a problem that young men of 50+ years ago had to surmount.

The "Canteen" of yesteryear has been replaced by a very large complex known as "Hughie Edwards Club" named after AIRCDRE Hughie Edwards, VC, CB, DSO, OBE, DFC. a famous Western Australian. Ground staff have this excellent facility for leisure time activities and socialising and it is maintained by Corporal Barber.

Basic Training Centre complex is another facility that also provides an alternative source of meals and snacks etc, as well as a retail shop stocked with electrical equipment and resources. The Base Library is also located there.

The Gymnasium is also set up for a whole range of indoor team games while one section is set aside for the rock climbing enthusiasts. In an adjacent room is an aerobic facility with all the modern equipment found in large professional civilian complexes as well as a weights facility with a great variety of latest equipment. All these facilities are well used by the health conscious personnel of Pearce, but under the control of the Physical Training Staff, who provide assistance and guidance if requested.

A whole range of outdoor games and sporting facilities are also at Pearce for use by all personnel on the Base.

## **Sergeants' Mess**

### **1937 / 38**

Their Mess now their domain, (it had been used by the Officers) the Senior NCO's soon formed a Committee to formulate the Policy of conducting a service mess in the accepted RAAF style. A Technical Library was established and billiard tables installed along with appropriate tables and chairs adjacent to the expanding bar facilities.

Comfortable, well-equipped living quarters, adjacent to the Mess must have created some envy to visiting RAAF personnel. Catering was of the highest standard but was further supplemented by the profits generated from the Bar. Some NCO personnel occupied married quarters but the Mess was the focal point for all socialising and "Dining in Nights."

## **Current Mess**

During May 1972 a new and larger Mess was officially opened with expanded facilities. With the old Mess now vacated, No 25 Squadron moved in and now finally had a substantial building for their Headquarters.

With Warrant Officer John Pearce as Chairman of the Mess and assisted by Warrant Nat Kahn as Deputy, the traditions of the Sergeants' Mess continues. Some additions have been added to the structure with some other alterations in the planning stage. With the Government's shift to private catering, there is every possibility this may occur at Pearce.

Dine in Nights are still a feature in the Mess but with the added inclusion of twice a year Mixed Members Nights when previous and honorary Members get together. Excellent daily meals are available and 32 rooms are in the adjacent Sergeants Quarters. All Base facilities related to sporting, games and health development are there for all RAAF personnel.

## **Officers' Mess 1937 / 38**

At the opening of their new Mess, the unmarried officers moved into their allocated rooms in the second storey of the building. Married officers were allocated married quarters on the Station.

The Mess provided three meals each day and from there much of the leisure time socialising was done. Billiards or snooker was popular as well as the "skeet" range (clay pigeon) which was located behind the Mess, provided for competitive shooting prowess.

Once a month a formal "Dining In" was held where RAAF traditions were conducted and the Station Band often provided the musical background for the evening. No one has any recollection of the "balcony" in the Mess ever being used. Weekend leave was available to officers and those lucky to own a car provided the transport for others to visit Perth and in particular, the Esplanade Hotel where the proprietor Mrs Pacton, made them most welcome.

Young Pilot Officers were paid 25/2 (shillings) per day (\$2.52) as a Short Term Commission Officer, for their first four years. Study and examinations had to be achieved if a young officer was to be granted a permanent Commission. One tradition adopted from the RAF was that of "batman" and one was shared between three Pilot Officers, while Senior officers had their own "batman."

Newly graduated Pilots had accumulated some 122 hours of flying when they were awarded their Wings. Sergeant Plots were also on these courses having been selected from the Ground Staff musterings for flying training. Some of the Flying Instructors at Point Cook were Sergeants in the pre-war period.

Each morning all officers had to attend the Parade where all personnel came together before marching off to their Sections. The Main entrance gate to the Station was an impressive building and continued in its role up until recent times.

### **The Current Situation**

Up to thirty Officers are able to reside in the Officers' Mess on a permanent basis, but if there is no room available it is usual to reside off the Base with an allowance provided. A number of rooms have been converted to a two-room apartment. Purchasing a meal ticket provides meals, for those living off the Base.

Up to 14 Transient Officers can be accommodated in buildings adjacent to the Mess as well as Flats for another forty Officers and Senior NCO's. Unlike pre-war there are now no provisions for the Batman.

RAAF Catering Staff currently provides meals, but there is the possibility, in the near future, that a Tender to provide meals may be implemented.

As Base Parades are held once a month, personnel now report to their own section at 0750 and the day ends at 1650 hours except on a Friday when stand down is at 1500 hours. Weekends are free except for those rostered as Duty Officer and Sections where shift work is the norm.

"Dining-In-Nights" are usually for special occasions and the Band Balcony has been used on a number of occasions. In recent times very successful "Soiree" (Musical Evenings) have occurred with a host of Guests and other Service Personnel. The culinary expertise of the Catering Staff was unsurpassed, while the success of the night was largely attributed to the music provided on one occasion, by the Naval Reserve Band.

Some officers are initially offered Permanent Commissions while others are enlisted as Short Term Commissions. Salary for a FLGOFF (Pilot) is now \$40,583 and a PLTOFF (Pilot) \$36,941.

Like most families and single persons the private car is now the norm for freedom of movement.

### **General Impression**

Comparison between the pre-war period and the present RAAF personnel, of all ranks, there is still a great deal of similarity, except now female personnel are an integral part of the Service.

Sporting and recreational pursuits are well catered for with a whole range of facilities to provide for the individual, small groups or teams with professional RAAF Instructors available to assist if requested. The Annual Medical and Fitness requirements required by the Service may be of some stimulus, but it is also evident that personnel of all ranks at RAAF Base Pearce voluntarily stay fit. Full is made of the gymnasium, swimming pool and the host of outdoor and indoor recreational facilities to enhance their own personal fitness. When requested, all Members of the Base have access to medical and dietary guidance by RAAF professional personnel.

The Pilot Trainee Mess has just been recently refurbished and it takes its place in observing and preserving the traditions that each of the other three Mess have inherited from the pioneers of the Royal Australian Air Force.

## Pearce “Ready Reserve”

Ready Reserve Personnel regularly attend Parades at Pearce where the emphasis is on physical fitness and weapon training. **Their role is primarily Airfield Defence** operating up to 5 km outside the perimeter of Pearce Base.

Once a year, in January, a special training camp is held at Murray Bridge in South Australia, where R.R. Members from all States attend. Consolidating defence skills and physical fitness is given high priority.

Attendance at Pearce Parades does allow for the educational commitments and examinations that Ready Reserve Members have under taken. There is some Government financial inducement to assist trainees, for it is readily recognised that successful educational qualifications could lead to positions in the Permanent Air Force. Some twenty-two are on strength of Pearce Ready Reserve with another seven have indicated joining early in 1995. Already a number of R.R. Personnel have been self motivated in joining sections of the PAF, or the other two Defence Forces, because of their introduction to Service life.

Perhaps, the vital role played by WW2 RAAF "Ground Defence" and the Royal Air Force "Regiment", has had some influence in the formation of Australia's Ready Reserve.

## Pearce Air traffic Control



From the control tower, Air Traffic Controllers must keep a close surveillance of all aircraft movements, both on the ground, in the landing pattern and especially any on finals. Instant reaction to emergency situations, and implementing procedures is the responsibility of ATC Personnel.



Radar Duty Officers must be ever vigilant with so many Trainee Pilots operating from Pearce and the Gin Gin Strip, combined with possible Civil aircraft movements.

A most exacting Profession.

## **Air Traffic Control at RAAF Base Pearce**

With the arrival of No. 23 Squadron on 10 March 1938, the need for control of aircraft movements was provided for by a Control Tower located near the present hanger. The Duty Pilot was responsible for take off and landings, which on a grass field was always directly into wind. The "Aldis Signal Lamp" would flash a "green" for permission to take off. Some aircraft had a TR 2b radio for the Pilot to call the Duty Pilot. A "Very Light Pistol", loaded with a red cartridge, was always readily available for emergency. These pistols, with an array of different coloured star combinations, was usually carried by aircraft for "signal of the day" replies.

During WW2, at nearby RAAF Pilot training schools (EFTS Cunderdin and SFTS Geraldton) where a great number of training aircraft would be flying, there was no radio control of aircraft. Trainee Pilots were each responsible for visual flight procedures and separations and had to continually scan the sky in all directions. Instructors demanded this at all times for it was basic training for future combat flying.

With the new and efficient radio equipped aircraft came the need for radio procedures and "Q" codes that simplified radio communication. Bomber Squadrons going on operations were frequently sent off with the "green" from an Aldis.

At RAAF Pearce, a new Control Tower was constructed in 1962 and was only used for visual control. During 1975 an "Approach Control Centre" was installed.

Today at Pearce, the Control Tower operates visual control over a radius of 8nm around the Base and up to 2000 feet. Radar plays a major role in the control of both military and civil aircraft transiting this air space. During flying training there can be some 80+ aircraft operating, so if a radar failure occurs all flying reverts to visual flight rules.

Flying Instructors or Duty Instructor are always present whenever a Student Pilot goes solo. Because the PC9 is a high performance aircraft an Instructor is readily available if a Student should require advice on how to handle an emergency. Captain Chin of the RSAF is also in the Tower to assist any Singaporean Student Pilot as well as acting in a liaison role with his Squadron Executives.

All aircraft carry transponders but Trainees do practise transponder failure checks. Because of the very high number of aircraft movements at this training base it is necessary to have a very efficient Air Traffic Control organisation. Currently an ILS is being installed on runway 18, and should be in operation by May 1995. A new radar system is planned for installation during 1996/97 thus adding to the efficiency of the A.T.C. at RAAF Base Pearce.

## Pearce and Veterans

Pearce Base has had a very long close association with many WW2 RAAF Personnel as well as post war ex-PAF member.

Soon after World War two, Reservist Training commenced, and induction back into the RAAF commenced for a great number of personnel. Many of those still continue their close affiliation with Pearce Base through Squadron Re-Unions, RAAF Association members, Empire Air Training Scheme Course (EATS), Air Crew Association, and air Training Corps Instructors Association.

Many still attend Dine-in Nights, Graduating Pilot Postings Nights, Pilot Graduation Parades, and AIRTC Graduation Parades held at the conclusion of their annual camps.

This close association with the Service, in which they have all served, has brought the "oldies" in contact with the present PAF, and an awareness of the many similarities in their training programmes. Each year the RAAF Association President attends the Wings Parade to present the Association Trophy Award.

One special feature of this association with Pearce is the keen interest in the changing facilities and the training aircraft that has evolved over the past 50+ years. The current No 25 Squadron Reservists also greatly reflect the interest and enthusiasm by their active presence with a Permanent Air Force Squadron.

Cadets of the Western Australian Squadron of the Air Training Corps have an on going association with the Base with their initial induction at 13+ years and frequently continuing their career path with their entry into the RAAF. Many look back with pride in their association with the Service.

This bond with the PAF, by the many affiliated groups, has developed over many, many years under the leadership of the Officer Commanding and the dedicated RAAF Base Pearce Personnel.

## **Reserve Pilot Training**

It was the intention of the Commonwealth Government in 1937/38 that No.23 Squadron would, on arrival in Western Australia, commence a training programme for Citizen Air Force Pilots from selected volunteers. This would ensure a nucleus of trained pilots should Australia ever be threatened by war.

In the United Kingdom there were at that time two volunteer groups operating for the training of pilots.

1. **The Auxiliary Air Force**, consisted of volunteer business, and professional people, formed into a number of Squadrons.

2. **The Volunteer Reserve** made up of volunteers, from all walks of life, who devoted their weekends to flying training and yearly camps with Permanent Royal Air Force Squadrons.

It was fortunate for Britain at the outbreak of WW2 with Germany, that the RAF called into service both volunteer groups.

Australia seems to have adopted the Reserve option and that is what was implemented at RAAF Pearce in 1938.

Soon after the end of WW2 Australia recommenced a Volunteer Reserve using Pilots, who had been discharged from the Royal Australian Air Force. Pearce set about with conversion courses for these Pilots using the aircraft available. Other Cadet volunteers were taught to fly up to Wings Standard by the PAF Pilots of the Squadron at Pearce. Many were then converted to high performance aircraft such as the P51 Mustang and later the Vampire.

In (1994) there was only one highly experienced, Reservist Pilot with No.25 Squadron at Pearce.

**Because of the very sophisticated, highly expensive aircraft now used in the RAAF it appears to be unlikely that the Reserve Pilot of yesteryear will ever be used. Currently there are two such Reserve Pilots operating at RAAF Base Pearce.**

## **HISTORY OF RAAF BASE PEARCE**

### **1992 TO 1994**

#### **Background**

In the years between the establishment of the flying training school at Pearce in 1957 and up to the beginning of the nineties, little had changed at Pearce. Indeed, the only change of great significance was the replacement of the Vampire with the Macchi in 1969, and coincident with the new aircraft type, a significant building project, which supplied a new students mess and living accommodation, a new training and operations building and a new avionics maintenance facility. All-through jet training on the Macchi was experimented with for a while, but was discontinued in 1971.

1990 signalled an era of unprecedented change at Pearce, with two significant events occurring in that year. One of these was the replacement of the Macchi as the advanced flying trainer with the Swiss designed and Australian built Pilatus PC9 aircraft. The PC9 had originally been selected as the replacement for the CT4 basic trainer at Point Cook, however, as it had quickly proven itself to be capable of progressing students to RAAF Wings standard, all through training on a single type was again introduced, leading to the disbandment of 1FTS at Point Cook, and making 2FTS the only under graduate flying training school in the RAAF.

Simultaneously, a decision was taken to return 25SQN to flying operations using the Macchi aircraft which were being phased out of 2FTS. WG CDR Gary (Huck) Ennis was appointed the first CO of the 'new' 25SQN to oversee the addition of a flying element which would be manned by permanent Air Force tradesmen and aircrew. Its roles would now include the conversion to type of all graduates who were to fly fast jets, ie, F/A18 or F111, together with a fleet support role to exercise with the increasing Navy presence in WA. The fleet support tasking provided an opportunity for potential F/A18 and F111 pilots to consolidate their flying skills before joining conversion courses at Williamstown and Amberley. These flying roles made 25SQN unique among contemporary RAAF reserve squadrons.

In March 1992, Air Commodore N. A. Smith arrived on promotion to take over command from Air Commodore Lowery. The posting of Air Commodore Smith was in itself unique, being the first officer without a General Duties background to have been given command of a flying base. Air Commodore Smith was an engineering officer whose career had been predominantly spent in engineering postings. However he had undergone flying training early in his career with subsequent tours on Sabres and Mirages.

In the three years of Smith's command, 1992 to 1994, another three major changes were to take place at Pearce. These were: the introduction of contractor maintenance of the PC9 at 2FTS, the arrival of the Singaporeans and the reorganisation of the base support structure. Together, they were to change forever the shape and direction of Pearce.

#### **Contractor Maintenance**

The introduction of contractors onto Defence Force bases had its origin in a report written by Mr. Alan Wrigley, who advocated, inter alia, the contractorisation of a number of Defence functions as a means of bringing Defence and the community closer together. The result of these recommendations was the formation of an inter-departmental committee (IDC) who formulated what

was to become known as the Commercial Support Program or CSP. Among the determinations of the IDC was a recommendation for PC9 maintenance at both Pearce and East Sale to be submitted to contractor support.

While the intention of Wrigley was to turn over such tasks to the best contractor in terms of value for money, the Defence Forces argued successfully that Service units should be able to enter the competition. Such was the case at Pearce, and in May 1992, 2FTS submitted an in house option (IHO) against a statement of requirement which included the provision of all PC9 maintenance except the major scheduled servicing (called the R2 servicing). The competitive environment saw 2FTS reduce its technical manpower requirement from around 200 to 147, however, it was not good enough to win the competition, which was awarded to a commercial company. Unfortunately for that company, and it seemed fortunately for Pearce, the company was asked to withdraw after an irregularity had been discovered in its tender. Consequently, the work was re-tendered in December 1992, but this time the request for tender included the R2 servicing as well as the operating level of maintenance.

At this stage, 2FTS staff had lost a little heart, believing that the odds were stacked against them. Certainly, the figures being used to cost RAAF manpower was considered by base management to be grossly inflated. Nonetheless the keenness of the OC and CO 2FTS, WG CDR John Woodman, to keep the PC9 maintenance in uniform, led to the engagement of a consultant to assist in compiling an even more competitive bid. Pearce was fortunate at this time in having the services of SQN LDR George Breen, who managed the development of the IHO, and of FLT LT Wendy Trow, whose expertise in work measurement enabled the manpower requirement for the scheduled servicing work to be halved. The end result was an IHO which had a manpower requirement of 81, an amazing reduction from the previous 147, and a number with which, even with the encumbrance of inflated manpower costing, 2FTS were confident of winning.

And win they did. In May 1993, Air Force Office announced that the PC9 maintenance (for both Pearce and for East Sale) would be awarded to the respective IHOs. However, the nearest competitor, Airflite, appealed against the decision on the grounds that 2FTS had used information in its IHO to which the commercial companies had no access. While the point of appeal was debatable, especially with respect to Airflite, which at the time was a RAAF contractor and should have had access to the same information as 2FTS, the decision was overturned. Thus, on 8 July 1994 Airflite took over PC9 maintenance, more than two and a half years after the original request for tender had been issued.

The intervening two and a half years had taken a heavy toll on the morale of troops at 2FTS and indeed of the entire base. The period of uncertainty caused by the progression of events- losing, winning, then losing again- threw many families into confusion and a feeling that they had lost control of their lives. 2FTS management had its work cut out maintaining some semblance of morale with the lowest point coming during the transition period in the 13 weeks prior to handover.

The work done on behalf of his people by the CO, his Senior Administrative Officer SQN LDR Alan Haynes and the newly arrived Senior Engineering Officer SQN LDR Graeme Stark is probably not appreciated by the troops to this day. However, the efforts of the CO and his senior staff won special consideration for 2FTS people, in terms of securing future employment in accordance with preferences for those who wished to remain with the RAAF, and favourable redundancy conditions for those who desired a transfer to Airflite. The number and quality of staff who subsequently joined the company had a direct bearing on its ability to produce more than sufficient serviceable aircraft to meet

the flying program from virtually the first day. So with the contractor performing well, and the troops reasonably happy with their personal outcome, a particularly turbulent era for 2FTS came to an end.

## **The Singaporeans**

**During 1992, and unbeknown to the RAAF, the Singaporeans were searching for solutions to overcome their acute airspace problem, particularly as it affected flying training. An approach was made at Ministerial level, and towards the end of 1992, Pearce was asked to consider whether it might be feasible to host part of the RSAF Flying Training School at Pearce on a permanent basis. Soon afterwards, a team from the RSAF visited Australia to assess a number of potential sites. The team selected Pearce because of the advantages offered in terms of its proximity to Perth with its international airport, its climate which is conducive to flying training, and the already established flying training environment.**

On 22 March 1993, a memorandum of understanding was signed by both Chiefs of Defence Force, which guaranteed the RSAF 25 years tenure in Australia with at least 15 years at Pearce. In July of the same year, an advance party arrived to set up the domestic arrangements, and in September, the CO, LT COL Willy Chow, arrived with the bulk of the school. The first 16 Marchetti S211 aircraft arrived by ship and road via Fremantle in the same month. The aircraft were transported complete with wings on low loaders, making an unusual sight for early morning risers on the weekend of 18/19 September 1993. Amazingly, in the following month, the RSAF flew in excess of 6000 hours, about equal to their planned mature rate of effort.

While the Singaporeans must be congratulated for the success and speed of their deployment, a major factor in the achievement was 2FTS. In preparing the in house option for the commercial support program, 2FTS had moved its aircraft maintenance activity into a single hangar, Hangar 95, leaving Hangar 93 free for 25SQN to occupy. This in turn freed up Hangar 122 and the former Air Movements Section from which 25SQN had conducted its operations since 1990. Thus the area provided an excellent interim facility for the RSAF.

The accommodation for the RSAF administration, crewrooms and classrooms was also made possible by CO 2FTS who made the lower floor of his training building available on an interim basis. Although not ideal, it proved adequate for the purpose, and served to cement a good working relationship between the Singaporeans and the Australians, one of the major desired outcomes from the project from the Australian perspective. The Singaporeans showed their appreciation to the base with a 'Tiger Party' held in Hangar 122 to celebrate both the beginning of operations at Pearce and the 25th anniversary of the formation of the RSAF.

Meanwhile, design of the permanent facility for the RSAF had started in mid 1993, with construction starting early in January 1994. The building project was managed on behalf of the Singaporeans by Director General Facilities Air Force, Air Cdre Fred Kennedy, who made several visits from Canberra to Pearce to monitor progress via Project Control Group meetings. By mid July, the new buildings had been completed well within budget but with a two week slip in the ambitious completion date, the only blemish on an otherwise impressive performance by the Australian contractors -Fletchers, Theiss and Transfield.

## **Reorganisation of Base Support**

The last change to the base during AIRCDRE Smith's command was the reorganisation of the base support. The change came as a result of a 'review of air base support' (RABS) which was conducted across the RAAF by a project team located in Canberra, with a view to making all base organisations more or less identical. A secondary objective of the review was to find some efficiencies by prescribing levels of supervision appropriate to various tasks. Although the review and its outcomes were externally imposed, all bases had some input into the process. Most of the work at Pearce was done by CO Base Squadron (COBS), WGCDR Peter Lehman, ably assisted by the Senior Supply Officer, SQNLDR Darryl Purdom, who had been moved from his primary appointment to head a locally formed Base Efficiency Review Team. While COBS and the OC concentrated on the wider organisational issues, Purdom and his team set about coordinating efficiency reviews in most areas of Base Squadron, together with the motor transport maintenance area which would be transferred from 2FTS to the new base support organisation.

The work done across the base support areas in pursuit of efficiencies resulted in a net decrease in manpower of some 88 positions, and was instrumental in Base Squadron winning the coveted Hawker Siddley Trophy for the most efficient support unit. The trophy was presented to WGCDR Lehman on a special parade held for the occasion on 15 June 94. Ironically, this was only 15 days before the formal disbandment of Base Squadron and its replacement by the new support organisation, No 306 Air Base Wing.

Apart from the manpower reductions and some rationalisation of sections, the major change to stem from the new organisation was the abolishment of COBS position, and indeed Lehman left Pearce on early retirement in July 1994. Under the new organisation, the former flights of Base Squadron, rationalised to a degree, reported directly to OC Pearce who also took on the title of OC 306 Air Base Wing. In the process, the rank of OC Pearce was reduced to Group Captain, in line with the organisations of other RAAF bases.

### **The Future**

The addition of the RSAF Flying Training at Pearce, together with the advent of all-through PC9 training and the Macchi flying at 25SQN, made Pearce the RAAF's busiest airfield in 1994, being the permanent home to 90 aircraft and recording over 100,000 movements a year. An increase in rate of effort for 2FTS in pursuit of increasing pilot graduation numbers from 45 to 55 a year will bring the airfield to its maximum capacity, and already a light runway parallel to 18/36 has been approved for construction in 1995. Some careful management of airspace and airfield resources will be required to ensure the ongoing efficiency and safety of our flying training.

Change will also continue in the base support area. As part of the overall Commercial Support Program, a number of the base support functions will be subjected to contractor competition during 1995. If these functions are taken over by contractors, the new OC, GPCAPT Green, will command the base in its busiest ever period, with the smallest number of uniformed personnel since the formation of the base 56 years ago.

## **Improving Pearce For our Successors 1995-1996**

1995 and 1996 were two years when the Air Force focus was on Pearce, and the focus of all those who had the pleasure of working at Pearce on 'Improving Pearce for our successors'. All ranks and personnel contributed ideas and considerable energy to setting the Base on track for future generations. The goal was to conduct and support safe air operations. The tasks were demanding with the number of air operations doubling and the number of RAAF personnel halving. Problems were identified, remedies proposed and implemented, and everyone got on with the job.

There were so many tangible signs of people's ideas coming to fruition. The new parallel runway was constructed to cope with the increased flying training; new computerised radar screens improved safety for air traffic control; a new aircraft paint shop was constructed to safeguard the environment and improve occupational Health and safety. New navigation aids were installed at Pearce and a remote farm to the North West of Pearce was purchased and navigation aids were installed at the site to decentralise instrument flying traffic and improve safety. Three new Cockpit procedural trainers were installed in 2FTS, and all the flying instructors were provided with computers to provide pre-flight briefs and post flight reporting and programming of flying training. Plans were developed and approved to build new classrooms and briefing rooms for 2FTS pilot training.

New crew rooms were provided for Air Traffic Controllers and a cover was installed on the steps outside of the control tower. The mechanical maintenance hanger was refurbished, the gymnasium was extended and air-conditioned and approval was given for a new base Medical Facility. Before and after school care was approved and funded, a child care facility was funded and constructed and facility functions on the base were commercialised.

All members of the base; PAF, Air Force Reserve, Public Servants, Contractors and RSAF should be very proud of the outstanding achievements. All contributed to the safe conduct and support of air operations and helped '**Improve Pearce for Our Successors**'.

## **RAAF Base Pearce 1997 - 1998**

A change in command at Pearce occurred on 7 January 1997. GPCAPT Lee Roberts replaced GPCAPT Dennis Green as the Officer commanding 306 Air Base Wing. At the same time, the significant changes overtaking the Australian Defence Force impacted heavily on the Base. On 1 January 1997, the Base support services were taken over by a civilian contractor under the Commercial Support Program. 123 Air Force Personnel provided messing, ground maintenance, refuelling operations and where housing were replaced by civilian personnel. Their baptism of fire started a few days later when the RAAF became involved in one of its largest and most audacious peacetime rescue missions of missing yachtsmen in the Southern oceans. RAAF Pearce provided support to the C-130 Hercules and P-3C Orion aircraft operating in conjunction with the frigate HMAS Adelaide.

In March 1997, the Defence Reform Program (DRP) began in Earnest throughout the Australian Defence Force. The DRP required further reductions in the number of military personnel employed on support duties. RAAF Pearce, as a designated training Base was heavily affected by the DRP. Over two years, fire services, guard gate duties and administration activities passed to contractors. The traditional three Services were divided into other organisations with independent responsibilities on the Base. Maintenance personnel belonged to support command, administration to Corporate support and facilities to the Defence Estate organisation.

Despite the designation as a training base, the operational tempo increased at Pearce. There were almost continuous Australian and foreign Air Force deployments in support of Special Air Service Regiment exercises and the RAN's rapidly increasing West Coast Fleet. This activity heightened the awareness of Pearce in the Public's eye – particularly after a sonic boom from an exercising F/A-18 Hornet was heard across Perth one crisp morning. In March 1998, RAAF Pearce became the mounting airfield for the Australian Defence Force's second deployment to the Gulf with the Special Air Service Regiment and Boeing 707 tanker aircraft.

No 2 Flying Training School increased its flying rate throughout the period. In July 1998, No 25 Squadron split to return to a Permanent Air Force Squadron, No 79, flying MB-326H Macchis, and No 25, City of Perth Reserve Squadron. The Republic of Singapore Air Force's No 130 Squadron continued to operate at Pearce. The Squadron continued their excellent safety record of the previous years with no losses.

1997-1998 involved a difficult transition from traditional Air Force workforce on Base to a significant civilian Workforce, and multiple layers of Management. Despite the challenges, RAAF Pearce maintained a high level of operational and training tempo, without aircraft loss, than at any time since the Vietnam War.

## **RAAF Pearce**

### **1999 to 2000**

Group Captain Steve Walker assumed command of RAAF Base Pearce on 4 Jan 99, coincidental with a change of command structure for Training Command. Training Command was reorganised to include two functional Wings: Air Training Wing with its headquarters at East Sale, and Ground Training Wing headquartered at Wagga. The practical effect of this reorganisation at Pearce was that 2FTS no longer reported through OC Pearce.

Another RAAF reorganisational initiative was the formation of Combat Support Group within Air Command and the disbandment of the Air Base Wing structures, to better focus airbase support elements towards preparedness and deployability. The southern bases followed suit, but remained within Training Command. 306 Air Base Wing was disbanded and Combat Support Force Pearce and 306 Combat Support Unit were raised in its place. The practical separation of levels and responsibilities between the formation and the unit was that CSFPEA operated at the tactical level for policy and plans, with 306CSU operating at the technical level as a coordinator of services for the airfield and airspace.

Along with ongoing Defence Reform Program changes and further civilianisation, command and control relationships upon the Base became increasingly complex. CSFPEA had responsibility for: one direct command unit (306 CSU); four service provider groups -Defence Estate, Corporate Support, Information Systems and Personnel Executive; five main lodger units -79SQN, 2FTS, 130SQN RSAF, 38SQN DET and 25SQN; ongoing support to ADF and foreign deployed forces, SASR and the W AAIRTC; and an increasing number of civilian contractors.

306CSU coordinated the services of 41 WG DET for the provision of air traffic control, IATS DET for air terminal services, and the health services flight. During the period, command of the Airfield Operational Services flight passed back from Support Command to Air Force, for the support and provision of maintenance for airfield facilities such as radio equipment, navigation aids, arrestor barriers and cables etc. Similarly, command of the RAAF security police passed back from Corporate Support to Air Force.

At the start of the period, Base contractors included: Airflite, for maintenance of the PC9s; Aerospace Engineering Services maintained the RSAF S211 ; SerCo GM provided garrison support services, being replaced by Transfield and Spotless SSL by Jul 2000; Lloyds provided the search and rescue helicopter support; and Asset Services (later Transfield) were the prime contractor for facilities maintenance. With the arrival of the Hawk to replace 79SQN's Macchis, British Aerospace Systems and Hunter Aerospace joined the family of Base contractors.

Civilianisation of military positions continued apace. In mid-99, military fire fighters were replaced by Transfield (although many members simply transferred from RAAF to Transfield). Access control at the main gate was contracted to Group 4. The Base Personnel Administration Centre was civilianised; military members being replaced by/transferred to Defence Corporate Support civilian positions. The personnel services area was further downsized as functions such as housing and travel were increasingly remotely handled by the regional centre at Leeuwin barracks.

Nevertheless, the base population of around 1000 people maintained their safe and effective output and responded to the various civil and Defence emergencies when required. Personnel from the

medical section were regularly deployed to Bougainville and East Timor. The East Timor situation also took personnel from air traffic control, air terminal services, physical fitness instructors, police dog handlers, airfield operational services technicians and the Base's 38SQN Caribou detachment.

The search and rescue helicopter evacuated patients from the hospital back to Perth during the Moora floods, and rescued several injured sailors from ships at sea. Pearce was a mounting base for the relief and evacuation of Exmouth after the cyclone, and for a replacement generator for Christmas Island. And of course, the Base continued to host all ADF aircraft types, as well as some from the RNZAF and USN, as the Indian Ocean basing of the RAN continued to increase the number of maritime exercises in the Western Australian Exercise Area.

In November 2000, the Pearce restricted areas were expanded to cater for the increased range and speed of the Hawk in the lead-in fighter role. The Base acquired an even more international flavour with the arrival of 10 students and three instructors from the RAF (UK), to train alongside their RAAF contemporaries at 2FTS. But undoubtedly the operational highlight of the period for Pearce was the arrival of the Hawk, preparation for which had included a major refurbishment of the 79SQN hangar, and of Building 160 to house the simulator and a computer-based training system for air and ground crews.

## COMMANDING OFFICERS HQPEA

RANK	NAME	DATES
GPCAPT	R.J.Brownell MC MM	6 Feb 39 - 14 MAR 40
SQNLDR	R.F.M. DALTON	14 MAR 40 - 6 MAY 40
SQNLDR	R.F.M. DALTON	6 MAY 40 - 17 AUG 40
GPCAPT	A.M.CHARLESWORTH CBE AFC	17AUG 40 - 9 JAN 41
WGCDR	R.F.M.Dalton	9 JAN 40 - 27 MAY 41
WGCDR	J.R.FLEMING	27 MAY 41 - 10 DEC 41
WGCDR	I.J.Lightfoot	10 DEC 41 - 20 JAN 42
GPCAPT	P.G.Hefferman OBE AFC	20 JAN 42 - 20 MAY 42
WGCDR	D.McLEAN	20 MAY 42 - 24 MAY 43
WGCDR	S.G.BREALEY	24 MAY 43 - 24 SEPT44
GPCAPT	R.F.M.GREEN DSO	24 SEPT44 - 9 APR 45
WGCDR	R.H.THOMPSON DFC	9 APRIL45- 14 SEPT 45
GPCAPT	G.C.HARTNELL CBE	14 SEPT45 - 6 JUL 46
GPCAPT	R.H.MORAN	6 Jul 46 - 16 APR 48
GPCAPT	M.F.FORD CBE AFC	16 APR 48 - 24 SEP 51
AIRCDRE	W.L.Hely AFC	24 SEP 51 - 25 AUG 53
GPCAPT	M.O.WATSON OBE MID	25 AUG 53 - 3 NOV 53
WGCDR	E.C.SAUNDERS MBE	3 NOV 53 - 7 APR 55
WGCDR	C.H.D.BROWNE	7 APR 55 - 10 DEC 56
GPCAPT	R.H.S.DAVIS CBE	10 DEC 56 - 22 JAN 62
GPCAPT	I.S.PODGER DFC	22 JAN 62 - 16 MAR 64
GPCAPT	D.L.WILSON DFC	16 MAR 64 - 11 JAN 67
GPCAPT	E.B.COURTNEY MVO OBE	11 JAN 67 - 4 OCT 69
GPCAPT	A.E. MATHER DFC AFC	4 OCT 69 - 21 JAN 71
AIRCDRE	S.W.DALLYWATER OBE	21 JAN 71 - 4 DEC 72
AIRCDRE	I.S.PARKER DFC AFC	4 DEC 72 - 20 JAN 76
AIRCDRE	D.W.HITCHINS AM AFC	20 JAN 76 - 16 JAN 78
AIRCDRE	J.W.Hubble CBE DSO AFC	16 JAN 78 - 15 JAN 79
AIRCDRE	J.S.PULESTON-JONES	15 JAN 79 - 6 JAN 81
AIRCDRE	N.F.ASHWORTH	6 JAN 81 - 7 JAN 83
AIRCDRE	K.J.TUCKWELL	7 JAN 83 - 31 MAY 82
AIRCDRE	G.W.NEIL DFC	31 MAY 82 - 14 MAY 87
AIRCDRE	B.I.LANE AFC	14 MAY 87 - 12 DEC 88
AIRCDRE	R.F.LOWERY AM	12 DEC 88 - 5 MAR 92
AIRCDRE	N.A.SMITH MBE	5 MAR 92 - 16 DEC 94
GPCAPT	D.G.GREEN	10 Jan 95 - 13 Jan 97
GPCAPT	L.C.ROBERTS	13 Jan 97 - 13 Aug 98
GPCAPT	P.S.SAPWELL	13 August - 4 Jan 99
GPCAPT	S. WALKER	4 Jan 99 - Dec 2000
GPCAPT	W. JOHNSTON	Jan 01 - May 2002
GPCAPT	P. SAPWELL	May 2002.....

## COMMANDING OFFICERS - 2FTS

RANK	NAME	UNIT NAME	DATES
WGCDR	C.F.Read DFC	1 FTS	Nov 47 – Aug 49
WGCDR	G.A.Cooper DFC	1 FTS	Sept 49 – Aug 50
WGCDR	P.M.G.Metzer	1 FTS	Aug 50 - Dec 51
WGCDR	R.H.Thompson	1 AFTS	Feb 52 – Sept 53
WGCDR	W.J.Guthrie	1 AFTS	Oct 53 - Dec 54
WGCDR	H.C.Plenty DFC & Bar	1 AFTS	Jan 55 - Dec 56
WGCDR	W.M.Coombes	1 AFTS	Feb 57 - Dec 59
WGCDR	K.G.Brinslet	1 AFTS	Feb 60 - Aug 62
WGCDR	T.W. Murphy	1 AFTS	Sept 62 - Dec 65
WGCDR	W.Stickley	1 AFTS	Dec 65 - Jan 68
WGCDR	B.H.Collins AFC,ADC	2 FTS	Jan 68 - Nov 70
WGCDR	K.H.Foster DFM	2 FTS	Nov 70 - Feb73
WGCDR	R.M.Greenwood AFC	2 FTS	Feb 73 - Jan 75
WGCDR	I.H.Whisker ADC	2 FTS	Jan 75 - Nov 76
WGCDR	K. N. Pyke AFC, ADC	2 FTS	Jan 77 - Jan 79
WGCDR	M.J.Canenagh Bsc	2 FTS	Jan 79 - Feb 81
WGCDR	A. A.Page AFC	2 FTS	Feb 81 - Jan 83
WGCDR	R.J.Connor Bsc, DIPRMCS	2 FTS	Jan 83 - Jan 85
WGCDR	P.F.Hay	2 FTS	Jan 85 - Jun 87
WGCDR	R.J.Wood	2 FTS	July 87 - Jan 90
WGCDR	.S.Rowe	2 FTS	Jan 90 - Jan 92
WGCDR	J.R. Woodman	2 FTS	Jan 92 - Jan 95
WGCDR	P.S. Sapwell	2 FTS	Jan 95 - Mar 98
WGCDR	P.F.Norford	2 FTS	Mar 98 - Jan 2001
WGCDR	C.J. Sawade	2 FTS	Jan 2001.....

## Commanding Officers 25 SQN

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>
FLTLT	D. McLEAN	JUN 39 - JUL 40	WIRRAWAYS
SQNLDR	BR. WALKER DSO	JUL 40 - SEP 41	MOTH MINORS
SQNLDR	D.T. FORSYTH	SEP 41 - MAY 42	SWORDFISH
SQNLDR	F. WILLKMS	MAY 42 - NOV 43	BREWSTER BUFFLOES, VENGEANCES
SQNLDR	C.J. SHARPE	NOV 43 - FEB 44	
WGCDR	R.J. BROWNELL MCM,	MMJAN 39 - JUN 39	Avro Trainers, Ansons Demon
SQNLDR	J.B. HOOPER	FEB 44 - JAN 45	
WGCDR	N.G. HEMSWORTH	4 JAN 45 - 25 JAN 45	LIBERATORS
SQNLDR	J.F.S. DENNETT (TEMP)	25 JAN 45 - 11 MAY 45	
WGCDR	J.B. HAMPSHIRE DFC	11 MAY 45 - 30 MAR 46	
<b>DISBANDED 25 SQN 30 MAR 46 - 1 APR 48</b>			
WGCDR	R.H. MORAN	1 APR 48 - 16 APR 48	TIGERMOTHS
WGCDR	N. FORD AFC	16 APR 48 - 13 SEP 48	
FLTLT	J.J. O'DONNELL DFC	SEP 48 - FEB 49	
SQNLDR	R.T. SUSANS DSO, DFC	FEB 49 - JUN 49	
FLTLT	J. ASHTON	JUN 49 - FEB 51	
SQNLDR	M.O. CARR	FEB 51 - MAY 53	VAMPIRES
FLTLT	K-A- MARTIN DFC (TEMP)	MAY 53 - JUL 53	
SQNLDR	S.W- HUBBLE DSO, AFC	JUL 53 - JUL 54	
SQNLDR	K.A. MARTIN DFC	JUL 54 - MAR 55	DAKOTA
SQNLDR	I.S. PARKER DFC	MAR 55 - JAN 57	
SQNLDR	N.P. McNAMARA	JAN 57 - AUG 58	
SQNLDR	L. READING DFC	AUG 58 - JAN 59	
WGCDR	C.D. MURPHY DFC	JAN 59 - MAY 59	WINJEELS
SQNLDR	C.F. FIVASH AFC	MAY 59 - DEC 61	
FLTLT	K.J. MYERS (TEMP)	DEC 61 - JAN 62	
SQNLDR	D.A. BURGESS-LLOYD	JAN 62 - DEC 64	
SQNLDR	A.D. NORTON(TEMP)	DEC 64 - FEB 65	
SQNLDR	D.A. BURGESS-LLOYD	FEB 65 - MAR 65	
SQNLDR	K.R. RODD	MAR 65 - MAY 66	
SQNLDR	C.H. MAWBY	MAY 66 - DEC 68	
SQNLDR	R.M. HAYES AFC	DEC 68 - JUL 69	
FLGOFF	B.J. GARDNER (TEMP)	JUL 69 - SEP 69	
FLTLT	BANFIELD (TEMP)	SEP 69 - DEC 69	
SQNLDR	W.E. DIXON	DEC 69 - DEC 71	
SQNLDR	H.A. COLLITS	DEC 71 - DEC 73	
SQNLDR	K.R. PAGE	DEC 73 - DEC 78	
SQNLDR	P.J. ANDREWS	JAN 78 - JAN 80	
SQNLDR	K.F. JOHNSON	JAN 80 - DEC 81	
SQNLDR	A.F. FOX	DEC 81 - JAN 83	
SQNLDR	R. LANDERSON	JAN 83 - DEC 84	
SQNLDR	M.G. McLEAN	DEC 84 - AUG 87	
SQNLDR	C. WHITE	AUG 87 - JUN 88	
SQNLDR	D.P. McNEALL	JUN 88 - JAN 89	
SQNLDR	R.N. BEECROFT	JAN 88 - JAN 90	
WGCDR	G.I. ENNIS	JAN 90 - JAN 92	MACCHI, PC/9 PILATUS
WGCDR	J.M. KENNEDY	JAN 92 - FEB 97	MACCHI
WGCDR	G.S. ROWE	FEB 97 - JULY 98	
.SQNLDR	J.K. LUMSDEN,	JULY 98 - JAN 99	SQNLDR P.M.HAYWARD JAN 99 - OCT 99
SQNLDR	T.J.HURFORD	5 OCT99 - 19FEB 2002	<b>SQNLDR N.Bricknell 20 Feb 2002 -</b>

## COMMANDING OFFICERS OF NO.3 TELECOM UNIT

RANK	NAME	DATE
FLTLT	FOSTER Q.J.	10.10.46
SQNLDR	WALKER R.G.	31. 5.48
<b>No records from 31.7.48 to 3.5.53</b>		
SGNLDR	BARNES G.H.	1953
WGCDR	BEURLE C.E.I.	26.3.53
No records from 30.9.53 to 1.10.58		
WGCDR	ROBB J.A. DFM	1958 - 1959
SQNLDR	LAMB C.J.	23.3.59
WGCDR	TYLER H.W. OBE	7.2.62
WGCDR	STANFIELD J.W.T	16.3.65
WGCDR	RYAN B.J.	30.12.68
WGCDR	BELL R.N.	8.1.71
WGCDR	COLEMAN P.R.	4.1.73
WGCDR	BRANDLI R.F.	14.1.75
WGCDR	NOBLE J.M.	30.1.76
WGCDR	SILCOCK P.R.	16.12.78
WGCDR	ASPINALL J.B.	15.12.80
WGCDR	DOUGLAS T.C.	17.1.83
WGCDR	SMEDLEY D.B.	6.1.86

No records from 1986 to 1992

WGCDR	BARTLETT G.	<b>1992 Disbanded</b>
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## **Epilogue**

During the 1990's RAAF Base Pearce has undergone massive structure and administrative changes (from its former traditional RAAF Base) with many services now being carried out by Civilian Company employees, while the number of Permanent RAAF Personnel has been greatly reduced.

No. 79 Squadron was reactivated in July 1998 to take over the very important role, that had been done for many years by No. 25 Squadron, in training Pilots destined for the current F111 and FA18 fast jets. Late next year the RAAF is planning to introduce the new British Aerospace Hawk 127 Series aircraft to replace the Macchi that is currently used at RAAF Pearce.

Late 1999 the first of the newly selected Air Force and Navy Trainee Pilots commenced their Course at Pearce after successfully completing their Initial Flying Training at the British Aerospace facility in Tamworth, N.S.W. A new Department of Defence initiative now has all three Defence Forces post their prospective Pilots to Tamworth for flying training and selection.

For what may appear to be an ending to a most interesting period in the development of RAAF Base Pearce, and the RAAF Personnel, who spent a period of their lives there, is but a pause in the on going account of Australia's Pilot Training Base, for what is in reality, only a portion of the overall history of the Royal Australian Air Force in the State of Western Australia.

It has been a most rewarding experience to discover the fascinating foundation of RAAF Base Pearce and the subsequent on going development and expansion. Probably, even more, has been the sheer pleasure of having talked to, and to have corresponded with, all those who were there.

To those, who have yet to be posted in to RAAF Pearce, may they also contribute to the heritage created by those who came before them.

**Leslie R. Jubbs**

**Perth, Western Australia**

## About the Author



Les Jubbs' first contact with RAAF Base Pearce was when he entered an Air Training Corps N.C.O. Course there in late 1942. While the base personnel were wearing summer uniforms the cadets were resplendent in their newly issued dark blue uniforms

In May 1943 he entered No. 5 Initial Training School Clontarf as an Air Crew Trainee along with 120 others. At the end of this course he was selected for pilot training and was then posted to No. 9 Elementary Flying Training School Cunderdin. Having successfully passed this phase of flying in Tiger Moths he moved to No. 5 Service Flying Training School Geraldton to fly the twin engine Avro Anson. He was presented with his wings in March 1944 and immediately was posted to England, hopefully to fly the Lancaster. Arrival in England was a week after the successful 6 June 1944 'D' Day landings.

Because of an incredible over supply of pilots from New Zealand, Canada and Australia it would be some seven months before a posting to an Advanced Flying Training School came about. On the eve of proceeding to an Operational Training Unit the war in the South West Pacific ended.

With many hundreds of other RAAF personnel the month long sea voyage back to Australia began, arriving off Fremantle at the end of November 1945. His discharge from the RAAF was towards the end of January 1946.

Under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme he completed a three year course and Graduated as a Teacher with the Western Australia Education Department. Currently he is an active member of the Air Crew Association, WA Branch. He has written another book, and with the assistance of the Veterans Affairs Department, published:

**“The RAAF MARINE SECTION, the Forgotten Era of Men and Vessels”**

**This book is now available: ( [www.futurepd.org/les](http://www.futurepd.org/les) )**



**Royal Australian Air Force**  
**Honours and Awards**  
**Distinguished Flying Cross**

**Squadron Leader Charles Cuthbertson Learmonth (385)**

**Citation:**

Squadron Leader Learmonth was posted to No 22 Intruder Squadron on the 22nd April 1942 and has been the flight leader of all strikes carried out by "A" Flight of the Squadron. He has taken part in one hundred and thirty six (136) sorties and under his leadership his Flight has reached every allotted target successfully, bombing and strafing from vulnerable heights of 1,000 feet to almost ground level.

He was the leader of a formation that bombed and sank a "Hubiki" class destroyer during the Battle of the Bismark Sea on the 3rd March 1943. His efficiency and speed in getting his Flight in the air and the determined manner in which he initiated the attack resulted in two direct hits on the destroyer.

Squadron Leader Learmonth has been the leader of many strikes against enemy lines of communication between Salamaua and Wau. He has also led flights on bombing and strafing attacks against Komiatum, Mubo, Garrison Hill, Mat Mat Hill, Guadagasal, Saddle and Waipali, often descending to as low as 400 feet to make sure of hitting his target.

On one occasion during an attack on Buna, his aircraft was badly hit. Although the starboard aileron controls were shot away, much of the fabric blown off the elevators and the fuselage riddled with holes, he brought his aircraft back to a safe landing at his Base by the exercise of great skill and coolness.

Throughout his entire operational career Squadron Leader Learmonth has set an example of courage, determination, leadership and devotion to duty which would be difficult to equal.

(signed) J.W. Barnaby Wing Commander  
 for Group Captain  
 Director of Personal Services

Reproduction



**Royal Australian Air Force**

**Honours and Awards  
Distinguished Flying Cross**

**Squadron Leader Charles Cuthbertson Learmonth (385)**

**Citation:**

Since being posted to No 22 Intruder Squadron in April 1942, Squadron Leader Learmonth has given outstanding and distinguished service. He has completed 159 sorties, 49 of which have resulted in strikes against advanced enemy positions.

After having temporarily commanded this Squadron for several short periods, he was appointed to its command on the 21st June, 1943.

He has led his Squadron in many attacks on Salamaua, Komiatium Ridge, the Pimple, and more recently at Gasmata. He has displayed tactical ability amounting to genius, and this faculty, together with his thoroughness, determination and coolness, has been largely responsible for the destruction of the objectives assigned to his Squadron.

He has proved himself to be an exceptionally capable Squadron Commander, the whole of whose operational service has been distinguished by devotion to duty of the highest order.

(signed) H.A. Winneke

Group Captain  
Director of Personal Services

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