

The Depot Squadron of the KNIL Army Aviation Corps and the Java-Australia airlift in the period February-March 1942

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Introduction

The Depot Vliegtuigafdeling (Depot Squadron -- D.VI.A.) of the Militaire Luchtvaart (Army Aviation Corps – ML) of the Royal Netherlands East-Indies Army (KNIL) was the transport squadron of the ML/KNIL, which at the outbreak of the war in the Pacific had nineteen large twin-engine Lockheed L18 Lodestar transport aircraft and a number of smaller aircraft for light transport and communication purposes at its disposal. The squadron was stationed at Andir near the city of Bandung in western Java and after the completion of the mobilization of the ML/KNIL on 12 December 1941 it consisted of sixteen Lodestar crews. Due to a sharp rise in the need for air transport and the loss of one crew in an accident, two additional crews were formed in January 1942. From the beginning of the mobilization the L18s and their crews played an extremely important role in moving ML/KNIL units to their war destinations outside Java and in supplying both ML and army units of the KNIL outside Java. Together with aircraft of the Koninklijke Nederlands-Indische Luchtvaartmaatschappij (Royal Netherlands-Indies Airlines-KNILM), Lodestars were also employed in January and February 1942 in the evacuation of large numbers of civilians (mainly women and children) from locations under Japanese threat, such as Tarakan, Balikpapan and Makassar.

There was also support for the military allies, such as Great Britain. As it was, the Royal Air Force (RAF) did not have any transport aircraft in the Far East and regularly called upon the ML for help in case of necessary movements of units from Singapore to Sumatra or of freight and military personnel to Java and from there to Sumatra. During the evacuation of Singapore the D.VI.A., on three consecutive nights, flew over 200 RAF and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) personnel in six Lockheed 18s to southern Sumatra which was still in safe hands. Little is it known that the Lodestar crews of the D.VI.A. also flew many high-risk long-range flights to Australia, and that as of 24 February 1942 they even maintained an airlift between Java, which had been surrounded by the Japanese by that time, and Australia together with Douglas DC-3 crews of the KNILM. This article attempts to give a description of the flights carried out by the

D.VI.A. to Australia, as well as those carried out by the KNILM in the context of the airlift (which was planned and coordinated by the D.VI.A.).

The first flights to Australia

The first flight to Australia to be made during the war days was flown by the crew of Lt J. P. G. F. Corsmit in the period between 1 and 5 January 1942. Corsmit flew Major R. Roos of the ML Command (the operational headquarters of the ML) for a conference to Melbourne via Sydney. The flight had been thoroughly planned with the help of the KNILM, which ran a regular service on Sydney. On the first day the crew flew from Andir to Bali (first night stopover), during the second day via Timor to Darwin (second night stopover), the third day to Cloncurry (third night stopover) and the fourth day to Sydney (fourth night stopover), to finally arrive at Melbourne on 5 January 1942. In the middle of January 1942 Corsmit, flight mechanic Sgt H. F. E. Loth and aviation wireless operator Corporal J. Kieft returned to Andir. Moreover, in January 1942, aviation wireless operators of the D.VI.A. acted as a stand-ins at the KNILM on a regular basis to gain experience on international flights. Thus, Corporal V. N. Jansen made a scheduled airline flight to Australia in a Douglas DC-3 flown by captain G. van Messel. [1]



Photo 1: Part of the “Boot detachment” at Broome on 15 February 1942 with Lodestar LT919 in background. Captain W.F. Boot in uniform with boots standing next to one of the other passengers (D. Stellema, deceased).

On 14 and 15 February 1942 a total of four Lodestars flew a detachment of 43 men to Archerfield (Brisbane) to take over new North American B-25C Mitchell bombers for the ML. This was the so-called Boot detachment, named after its Commanding Officer Captain Willem F. Boot. Unfortunately, Lt Corsmit was not available, having been deployed with his crew in the evacuation of Singapore at the time of the planning of the mission. That is the reason why ML Command, in consultation with the KNILM, called up into active duty Reserve Captain Van Messel for the duration of the trip. Van Messel had left for Sydney on 2 February 1942 and at the time of the planning of the flight had just returned from this regular KNILM flight. The first two aircraft left on 14 February and were flown by Res Capt Van Messel and Sub Lt Jan A. J. Ooninx with 2Lt W. F. A. (Guus) Winckel as 2nd pilot and to assist with the navigation. There was also an American war correspondent on board. The second pair of Lodestars departed a day later and they were flown by Res Lt A. Reyers of the KNILM (also called up for temporary active service and who had been given instructions on the Lodestar by Lt Joop Jansen as a preparation on 13 February) and Lt Joop Jansen. Ooninx made stopovers at Madioen and Malang (where they made a night stopover) in order to pick up a few more mechanics of the Boot detachment. From Bali (where the other three L18s made their first night stopover) the aircraft flew to Broome (where a second night stopover was made) and from there to Cloncurry (third night stopover) by way of Daly Waters. Reyers and Jansen, incidentally, took two stranded fighter pilots of the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) along from Bali to Australia. [2]

It was their intention to fly direct from Cloncurry to Archerfield. The aircraft LT919 of Ooninx, however, stranded in a meadow at Cincallera with a right engine that had had to be switched off due to leakage of oil, upon which the left engine had become overheated. Van Messel, subsequently, flew to Roma via Longreach, close to the place of the emergency landing, in order to assess the situation. Ooninx needed two new engines, but seemed to be able to reach Archerfield after emergency repairs. Van Messel continued on his own and arrived safely at his destination on 17 February 1942. Ooninx' aircraft arrived three days later after having undergone emergency repairs. A group of mechanics of the Boot detachment, led by SM E. van Aken together with flight mechanic Sgt J. A. Rijks of the LT919, had worked for two days and one night on the aircraft. They had been helped by a number of mechanics from an American

Depot at Archerfield, where Van Messel had asked for help. The other passengers of Oonincx' plane left for Brisbane by taxi on 17 February. [3]

On 18 February Reyers (flying aircraft LT914) and Jansen (LT909) arrived at Archerfield. In the morning of that day Van Messel was to have left for the return flight, but he was still there. In the night of 17 and 18 February an Australian civilian Douglas DC-3 collided with a row of parked aircraft while taxiing, completely destroying the fuselage of the LT922, Van Messel's plane; the result was a total loss, plus one Boeing B-17E bomber of the USAAF sustaining heavy damage. [4]



Photo 2: Wreck of the LT922 at Archerfield late February 1942. ML and USAAF personnel are busy taking off the engines to transfer these to aircraft LT919 (Alan Bovelt collection, via Gerard Casius and Gordon Birkett).

On 19 February Reyers and Jansen left for their return flight, taking along Van Messel and his aviation wireless operator Corporal J. van Doorn as passengers. Winckel, who had come from Roma to Archerfield with Van Messel, was now detailed as 2nd pilot with Reyers. Van Messel flew along with Jansen, acting as 2nd pilot on the Cloncurry-Broome leg to assist with the navigation. At Broome the party ran into a large group of KNILM personnel (complete with members of their families) in the afternoon of 20 February, on their way from Kemajoran (the KNILM main operating base near the city of Batavia, the present-day Jakarta) to Sydney in five DC-3s and three Lockheed 14s (a smaller version of the L18). The KNILM was going to set up a base there for the shipment of urgent freight to Andir via Broome on orders of the military

authorities and with instructions from the Kantoor Luchttransport (Air Transport Office) of ML Command. In the mean time, the KNILM aviation wireless operators had already been militarized in January 1942. Due to the many night flights by L18s of the D.VI.A. (reinforced on a regular basis with a Douglas DC-2 or DC-3 of the KNILM for military transport) the ML radio station at Andir was given a permanent 24-hour occupation and the KNILM personnel had to work in shifts. That militarization was now being considerably expanded. [5]

At Broome Van Messel changed over on to the DC-3 PK-AFV, which was the only one of the KNILM planes to fly back to Java on the evening of 20 February to pick up (at Andir) additional ground personnel of the KNILM and family members of the KNILM personnel to be stationed at Sydney. Lt Jansen also left that evening and arrived at Andir in the early morning of 21 February 1942 after a night stopover at Malang. Lt Reyers' LT914 had an engine malfunction and could not leave Broome until the morning of 21 February. The LT914 safely reached Andir in the late afternoon of the same day. [6]

Ooninx stayed behind at Archerfield to wait for new engines. They, however, failed to appear; nor did Ooninx get any instructions as what to do with the wreckage of Van Messel's plane. On his request and on Boot's authority, the chief mechanic of the Boot detachment declared the LT922 a write-off. After having taken out the undamaged engines of the LT922 and having built them into the LT919 (again with American help), Ooninx made a test flight on 6 March 1942. The following day he left with his crew members (aviation wireless operator Sgt D. Stellema and flight mechanic Sgt Rijks) and the mechanic of the LT922 for Laverton airfield at Melbourne via Sydney, where they made a night stopover. The crew had been directed to Melbourne by Lt Petrus (Peter) van Buuren, who arrived with a Lodestar at Archerfield on 4 March on its way to Melbourne (see below) where Major Roos (who had become a liaison officer with the RAAF Headquarters in the mean time) was to give instructions to the ML personnel in case contact with Java was broken. Roos kept the two L18s at Laverton for the time being as the situation in Java was considered too uncertain to authorize return flights to Bandung. [7]

The Bandung-Australia airlift

After the return of the remaining two aircraft from Archerfield, the L18s of the D.VI.A. made regular flights to Australia. Together with the KNILM, the D.VI.A. maintained an airlift between

Broome and Andir, with some of the KNILM aircraft flying on to Sydney to pick up freight. The L18s made the trip with a stopover at Malang, whereas the DC-3s flew the route direct. In the mean time three L18s (the LT917, the LT918 and the LT925 of the flight of Lt Y. H. Mulder) had been fitted out with an extra 400-litre fuel tank in the cabin and had been completely furnished for transport of freight by the Technische Dienst (Technical Service-TD) of the ML at Andir. Anything that could save weight and was not strictly necessary had been stripped from the cabin, including the parachutist seats along the sides of the fuselage. The planes also received an armament of two 7.7 mm machine guns in removed aft cabin windows as some other L18s had already received during scheduled maintenance. As back-up also the LT909 and the LT914 were fitted out with an extra tank during maintenance a few days later. During a test flight on 27 February over the Bandung plateau the latter plane, however, diverted to Semplak due to an air raid alert, only to be damaged after all in a Japanese air raid. [8]



Photo 3: Factory photograph of the already spartan original interior of the L18. The racks for luggage and the parachutist seats along the fuselage were completely removed by the Technical Service at Andir (Lockheed photograph, via G.J. Casius).

The extra 400 litres of fuel brought the range up to nine hours, but the added weight now allowed only seven passengers including their luggage (681 kilogrammes in total). Without a (filled) extra tank and limiting the load to nine passengers with luggage or eleven with only hand luggage (876 kilogrammes in total), the range could be increased to eight and a half hours. Direct flights between Bandung and Broome also took up to a maximum of eight and a half hours, so the fuel reserve would be minimal. The D.VI.A. decided to keep using Malang as a stopover. Thus, the long flights from Java to Broome, with most of the route over sea and with unpredictable monsoon winds that sometimes could cause sudden head winds or push an aircraft off course, could be shortened to a maximum of five and a half hours. There was no Air-Sea-Recue service and the chances of being rescued in case of an emergency landing at sea were negligible. The KNILM, too, fitted out four of its DC-3s with an extra tank (of 800 litres) and completely stripped the cabins of these aircraft (the PK-AFV, the PK-ALO, the PK-ALT and the PK-ALW) bare, with the exception of one chair. Depending on the freight on offer, the 800 litre tanks were fully or partially filled. The ML supplied two 7.7 mm machine guns per aircraft, which were mounted in removed aft cabin windows, as on the L18s. As was mentioned above, the KNILM flew the route from Andir to Broome direct. [9]

With its DC-3s and the L14s the KNILM operated completely under military authority. Captain Sam de Mul, the Commanding Officer of the D.VI.A. acted as CL (Commandant Luchtstrijdkrachten-- local Air Officer Commanding) on behalf of the ML and issued the operational instructions and other orders to the KNILM crews. All the necessary coordination between the KNILM and the D.VI.A. as well as the actual flight planning, was done by a small staff of the D.VI.A. led by Captain De Mul. The DC-3 PK-AFV, the plane Van Messel had used to fly back and which left again with approximately ten passengers from Andir with destination Broome on 21 February at around 21:00 hrs, made the trip during the following night in the opposite direction to once again pick up ground personnel of the KNILM and members of their families who had to go to Sydney. The aircraft left Broome without any cargo, as none had arrived there yet. [10]

The PK-AFV, which had left again from Andir in the evening of 23 February, arrived at Broome in the morning of 24 February. On its outward flight the aircraft conveyed a few family members

of KNILM personnel, and, several Dutch East-Indies civil servants and allied military and civilian evacuees. They were all dropped off at Broome, pending the arrival of Lockheed 14s of the KNILM which were to fly everyone to Sydney and Perth. [11]

In the mean time urgent freight from Dutch ships coming from the United States, or arriving by rail or with Australian civil aircraft, was off-loaded at Sydney. Goods purchased in Australia were also transferred to Sydney and so were arms, military equipment and ammunition destined for Java from several Australian and allied depots in cities on the east and south coast of Australia. Personnel of the Dutch consulate at Melbourne, civil servants who had been flown to Australia and some businessmen contracted by the Dutch East-Indies authorities (import specialists) coordinated this transport. This was one big puzzle, as the ships manifestos had to be put next to the order lists of the government departments and private firms in order to filter out the “urgencies” (mainly specified by the armed forces). Thus, via the airlift the KNIL received, amongst others, modern American (portable) anti-tank guns and ammunition to match as well as a rather large number of Johnson .30-06 light machine guns and Thompson .45 submachine guns plus ammunition. Also, urgently needed spare parts for aircraft of the RAAF and USAAF in Java went through the airlift to Bandung. [12]

In the late afternoon of 24 February the PK-AFV with the first shipment of urgent cargo left for Java. The DC-3 flew back directly to Andir. The cargo had arrived at Broome from Sydney by Lockheed 14s and a DC-3 of the KNILM (the PK-ALT) and mainly consisted of arms, weapon parts (such as machinegun barrels), ammunition and spare parts for aircraft. Apart from the PK-AFV, the DC-3s PK-ALO and PK-ALW, which had arrived from Sydney after a night stopover at Charleville, also made the trip to Andir with a similar cargo. The latter two DC-3s were the last to take off from Broome at around 22:00 hrs local time. They arrived at Andir in the morning of 25 February after a flight of approximately eight and a half hours. [13]

The return flight, incidentally, was just as risky as the outward flight from Andir to Broome. After the long stretch over sea up to Tjilatjap on the southern coast of central Java, during which the radio station of Andir had to be tuned into at the half way point for a bearing, the mountain range that enclosed the Bandung plateau (on which Bandung and Andir airfield were located) had to be negotiated. The mountains were so high that the only way to do this was by flying

through one of the passes. On a clear night they were easy enough to find, but when visibility was poor or in case of clouds, the pilots were sometimes forced to make a lengthy search for them on fast-dwindling fuel supplies. The DC-3s, on top of that, had the added disadvantage that, unlike the L18s, they were not equipped with a radio compass, which made locating Andir all the more difficult and sometimes even impossible.

The transport planes that maintained the airlift were unloaded at Andir at the D.VI.A. platform in the south-western corner of the airfield and then (usually in the early morning) went to a shelter base at the Boeabatoeweg (the L18s) on the southern edge of the city of Bandung. In case this was fully occupied the L18s went to Tasikmalaja airfield, a large air base to the south-east of Bandung, while the KNILM used Tjikampek as a shelter field. Tjikampek was the original shelter field for the L18s, but on 23 February the D.VI.A. took the Boeabatoeweg shelter field into use and Tjikampek began to be used for the DC-3s and other KNILM aircraft that flew on Andir. On both shelter fields and also at Tasikmalaja there were excellent possibilities for camouflaged parking of the aircraft under and among the trees, an absolute necessity, as Japanese aircraft were carrying out regular air raids on airfields in western Java. Also, at the Boeabatoeweg camouflage nets had been spread among the trees and the houses along the runway and the parked L18s were covered with large leaves. The Boeabatoeweg, incidentally, was not an easy strip for the L18s. The field had originally been intended for fighter aircraft, and the houses and trees were standing rather close to the runway (a stretch of road of about 800 metres) and turning around during taxiing was a major problem. This had to be done with a blocked “inner wheel” and giving full throttle. [14]

After the KNILM had transported the first loads of cargo to Andir, the first two L18s left for Broome via Malang in the afternoon of 25 February. They were the LT918 of the crew of 2Lt Guus Winckel and the LT917 of the crew of Res 2Lt Herman J. A. C. Arens. The latter came from the KNILM and had been called up for active duty at the D.VI.A. in January 1942 together with his KNILM colleague Res 2Lt H.C.A. Smits van Burgst. The two aircraft arrived at Broome in the morning of 26 February. On their outward flight the L18s took along several civil servants and some NEI military personnel, who had to go to Australia for various reasons. Also allied military personnel from the disbanded allied ABDA headquarters and its subordinate

headquarters and disbanded allied units were flown to Australia, including two American staff officers of the disbanded ABDA-AIR headquarters (Lieutenants Colovin and Eddy of the American Far East Air Force). Both L18s took off with their cargo in the afternoon of 26 February for Malang, where the night was spent, and arrived safely at Andir in the morning of 27 February. [15]



Photo 4: Aircraft LT918 photographed at factory. This L18 was flown by 2Lt W.F.A. Winckel and his crew members during the period of January 1942-early March 1942 (collection author).

In the evening of 25 February the three DC-3s at Andir (the PK-AFV, the PK-ALO and the PK-ALW) flew back to Broome with a number of Australian and American officers from disbanded allied headquarters plus some military personnel from disbanded allied units on board and a few KNILM employees and members of the families of personnel stationed in Australia (the PK-AFV and the PK-ALW with destination Sydney). Among the allied officers was the Australian Major-General Charles E.M. Lloyd, deputy intendant-general in ABDA Command, but also a number of subaltern officers, two of whom were American staff officers of the Far East Air Force USAAF, coming from the disbanded ABDA-AIR headquarters, Lieutenants Gray and Graham. [16] The PK-ALT, which in the mean time had arrived at Broome from Sydney in the afternoon of 24 February, had been unloaded there. The following day the crew flew passengers who had been stranded at Broome to Perth, and then returned on 26 February to Broome (see below). [17]

Three DC-3s left Broome in the second half of the afternoon of 26 February for Andir. They were the PK-AFZ, the PK-ALO and the PK-ALT, all loaded with urgent cargo, mostly weapons and many cases of ammunition. The PK-AFZ came from Sydney. The PK-ALT had been re-loaded again at Broome in the afternoon of 26 February. Due to the bad weather, the PK-AFZ got far off course and went missing (after the war it turned out that the aircraft had made an emergency landing in southern Sumatra, after which the crew had been killed), while the PK-ALT (ending up at the western tip of western Java instead of Tjilatjap) landed at Kemajoran rather than Andir. This latter plane was flown over to Andir in the evening of 27 February. [18]

Furthermore, in the early afternoon of 26 February an L18, the LT925 of the crew of Lt Mulder, left from Andir for Broome via Malang. This was the only ML aircraft to fly to Australia that day and it took along two staff officers of the ML (Major Roos and Captain B. J. Fiedeldij, both appointed liaison officer with the RAAF Headquarters) with members of the Fiedeldij family and luggage to Broome, from where they were to continue their journey with Australian civilian airplanes. As these were not expected for some days to come, Major Roos and members of his family (see below), who were the first to leave Broome on 1 March, were transported to Sydney by KNILM L14. With no refueling stopover needed, Mulder flew back “empty” and arrived at Andir in the afternoon of 27 February. His aircraft was needed for a flight with three L18s to Bangalore in British India the next day (see below) and he was not allowed to wait for cargo. [19]

Two DC-3s of the KNILM, the PK-ALO and the PK-ALT (the latter destined for Sydney) took off from Andir in the night of 27 and 28 February for Broome. Their passengers were partly personnel of the KNILM and members of their families, partly military personnel from disbanded allied headquarters and units. Among them was Air Commodore Joseph Eric Hewitt, the former Director of Plans and Air Operations of ABDA Command. In the PK-ALO also Major Roos’ wife and four children travelled to Broome. [20] The Lodestar LT918 (the crew of Winckel) followed in the afternoon of 28 February. This aircraft first flew to Malang, as usual, and arrived at Broome in the morning of 1 March. The DC-3 PK-ALO took off from Broome for the return flight to Andir in the evening of 28 February loaded with cargo; the LT918 followed a day later and arrived at Andir shortly after midnight of 1 and 2 March. [21]

The evacuation of the D.VI.A. and the KNILM to Australia

On the evening of 1 March 1942 the L18s of the D.VI.A. were transferred to Perth at a moment's notice in connection with Japanese landings in Java, amongst others, at Eretan Wetan on the northern coast to the north-east of Bandung. Due to the rapid Japanese advance and an unsuccessful attempt by the KNIL to quickly recapture the large Kalidjati airfield (close to Eretan Wetan and occupied by Japanese troops on 1 March), the Lodestar aircraft had to be brought to safety. The evacuation of these aircraft began around midnight of 1 and 2 March. During the departure of the four L18s that were to leave, 2Lt Winckel landed with his cargo from Broome. Winckel had made a direct flight Broome-Andir this time as Malang had been bombed by the Japanese. Captain De Mul was ordered to establish a new base at Perth and to continue the D.VI.A. part of the airlift to Bandung from there. Broome was too small, almost completely devoid of any facilities, and, on top of that, with an insufficient supply of aircraft fuel to station the squadron there. Port Hedland (marginally closer to Bandung, but with even fewer facilities than Broome) was to function as operations base next to Broome. [22]

The four Lodestars (the LT907, the LT921, the LT923 and the LT924, all without extra fuel tank but armed with two 7,7mm machineguns) that took off from Andir that night transported, amongst others, gold, money and stocks and shares. Part of the Netherlands East-Indies gold and foreign currency stock was brought to safety. For the rest, the cargo consisted of some ground equipment and tools and a considerable number of cans of engine lubricant. There were also a number of passengers who had been assigned to fly along earlier. They had already been assigned as, according to existing emergency planning, two of the four L18s were to have left for Broome with the gold and the foreign currency anyway in the night of 1 and 2 March, together with two civil servants (affiliated with the foreign intelligence service of the Netherlands East-Indies Government) who were taking along a radio transmitter, and Colonel J.A. Verkuyl, head of Section VII (the Intelligence department) of the KNIL General Staff. Verkuyl was a cryptologist who had broken Japanese codes and he would continue his work in Washington after a short stay in Australia. A few more passengers, ML service personnel transferred to Australia who happened to be available, had been added in the evening. This time the journey

went directly to Broome, a flight of approximately eight to eight and a half hours. All aircraft arrived safely at Broome and from there three went on to Perth, while one Lodestar left in the morning of the next day (20 minutes before a Japanese air raid, see below) for a trip to Sydney and Melbourne via Cloncurry and Archerfield, with the three intelligence officials and a few other passengers. [23]

The three aircraft to go to Perth were flown by Lt J.P. Welter (the LT923), SM J.E. de Jongh (the LT907) and 2Lt J.C. Veenstra (the LT924). Corporal J. E. Leydelmeijer (one of the dispatchers of the D.VI.A. at Andir) and several ML service personnel destined for the evacuated Vliedschool-Flight School of the ML, by now re-established at Adelaide came along in the evacuation. On 1 March the permission came to also evacuate the wives and children of the married pilots and crew members; the reason for this was that the D.VI.A. had been officially transferred to Perth (as a major part of the KNILM had been to Sydney), leaving a small detachment at Andir and Boeabatoeweg. The permission came at a very late hour, however, and consequently only very few family members could be taken along. These included the wife of Sub Lt Ooninx, who was still at Archerfield and the wife and four year old son of SM De Jongh. In the afternoon of 2 March the three aircraft to go to Perth arrived at their destination.

Apart from Colonel Verkuyl, Lt Van Buuren (flying the LT921) took to Melbourne Mr. C. J. Warners, M.Sc., a senior department head of the PTT, the government Postal, Telephone and Telegraph service, and Mr. J. Jansen, M.Sc., deputy head of the radio-technological research department of the PTT. The civil servants were taking along to Australia three large metal cases containing a radio transmitter built by the PTT, intended to maintain radio communications from Australia with a secret intelligence organization in case Java was occupied. Also the wife and child of SM De Jongh, the wife of Sub Lt Ooninx and the wife of an unknown D.VI.A. crew member came along with destination Brisbane. The LT921 stayed at Cloncurry in the night of 3 and 4 March, from where Mrs. De Jongh and her son had to travel to Brisbane by train as a crashed American fighter pilot 2Lt Robert Oestreicher had to be taken along. Military personnel had priority over civilian evacuees according to the current allied rules. The LT921 had guided the Curtiss P-40 pilot from Daly Waters to Cloncurry where a refueling stop had to be made. The tired Oestreicher had not noticed that the LT921 had not yet taxied off the runway and landed

almost on top of it. He could prevent this by pulling up but, as a consequence of not “going around”, landed too far on the runway and ran off it at the end, crashing through the airfield fence and ruining his airplane. He arrived at his destination Archerfield on 4 March but as a passenger on the Lodestar. The LT921 finally arrived in Melbourne on 6 March after night stopovers in Brisbane (Archerfield) and Sydney. [24]



Photo 5: Lieutenant Robert Oestreicher on his Curtiss P-40E at Darwin in February 1942 (Gordon Birkett RAAFWA collection).

Six KNILM aircraft (two Douglas DC-2s, three Douglas DC-5s, and one Lockheed 14) already evacuated in the afternoon of 1 March on orders of the military authorities. The aircraft first flew from Andir to Malang where, on arrival, their crews found out that the runway lighting was unavailable due to the earlier Japanese air raid. The duty officer saved the day by lining up cars with burning headlights and all airplanes landed safely. The crews took off again during the very early hours of 2 March 1942, with Sydney as a final destination. Apart from KNILM personnel and their wives and children, ten ML pilots destined to supplement the Boot Detachment at Archerfield, were on board the several KNILM planes. The departure of this ML personnel did not go without its problems as the KNILM originally intended to give prevalence to family members of its own personnel. ML Command, however, issued a priority movement order and

the ML servicemen were instructed to carry a loaded pistol and to enforce transport if necessary. Four other pilots and ten mechanics destined for Archerfield left on 1 March on board *MS Zaandam* from the port of Tjilatjap. [25]

As was mentioned above, the Lodestar LT918 of the crew of 2Lt Winckel and also one DC-3 (the PK-AFV coming from Sydney) arrived at Bandung from Australia with cargo in the night of 1 and 2 March. Besides making landings on several locations in western Java, the Japanese had also landed on the northern coast of eastern Java the night before. For that reason (even though Malang was not yet under direct threat), all the flights of the D.VI.A. after 1 March went direct from Broome to Andir (and on a few occasions from Port Hedland to Andir) for reasons of safety or vice versa. [26] After the night of 1 and 2 March the L18s departed from the Boeabatoeweg and landed at Andir, while the DC-3s kept making use of Andir for departure and arrival. The KNILM airplanes were dispersed at Andir during the day, however, as Tjikampek had been evacuated on 1 March due to Japanese advances on the ground. [27]

Apart from Winckel's aircraft, there were three further L18s in Java (the LT908, the LT914 and the LT916) after the evacuation. One aircraft was at Andir for planned maintenance, a second returned from Samarinda II in eastern Borneo to Java on the morning of 1 March and was only flown back, probably from Pameungpeuk or Tasikmalaja, to the Boeabatoeweg on the morning of 2 March, and the third L18 (LT914) was at Andir for repairs of the damage it had incurred during the Japanese air raid on Semplak on 27 February 1942, mentioned above. Furthermore, three L18s (the LT909, the LT917 and the LT925) were on their way back from Bangalore in British India after the transport of the ML crews who had gone there to pick up new North American B-25C Mitchell bombers. A number of pilots and crew members volunteered to stay behind in Java or had been assigned to the Lockheed L12A/L212 light transport aircraft that were now exclusively employed in Java. Among the volunteers who stayed behind were Lt Corsmit, who became the Commanding Officer of the D.VI.A. detachment at Andir and the Boeabatoeweg, and 2Lt Jaap C. Renaud and his crew members, who were to fly the LT914 over after it had been repaired. [28]

The airlift continued after the Japanese invasion, now on the outward flight for the evacuation of the remaining aircraft and the personnel that were needed in Australia. In the night of 2 and 3

March 1942 a total of four transport aircraft took off. The first to leave around midnight was the LT918 (flown by the crew of 2Lt Winckel), who took off from the Boeabatoeweg, followed at 00:30 hrs by the DC-3 PK-ALO from Andir. A second DC-3 (the PK-AFV) took to the air from Andir at around 01:15 hrs. The LT916 (the crew of Sub Lt P. J. F. Kranenburg) was to leave from the Boeabatoeweg at around 01:30 hrs, but trouble with the starboard engine caused it to take off twenty minutes late. It was to prove the plane's rescue (see below). The LT916 had become available at the last possible moment, upon which a number of passengers had been relocated over the transport planes and some more had been added. The L18s flew direct to Broome with Perth for their final destination. Their passengers included the wives and children of some D.VI.A. members already in Australia and of the two crews, as well as the wives of Captain De Mul and 2Lt Renaud. [29]

The aircraft of the crew of Winckel (2Lt Winckel, flight mechanic Sgt C. C. van Tuijn and aviation wireless operator Sgt W.B. Maks) transported as many as fifteen passengers, among whom there were seven ML servicemen, Res Capt F.H. Copes van Hasselt, LL.M. (ML Command), a technical officer, three mechanics (with destination Archerfield) and two student pilots of the ML Flight School in Adelaide, five wives and three children of D.VI.A. personnel. The aircraft of the Kranenburg crew (Sub Lt Kranenburg, flight mechanic Sgt P. Borgmeijer and aviation wireless operator Sgt J. J. L. M. Janssen) had sixteen passengers on board. They were two British women with two small children, three wives and four children of D.VI.A. personnel, four economic and monetary experts sent out by the Netherlands East-Indies authorities and an American engineering officer of the USAAF. The passengers in the LT918 (with the extra tank unfilled as it was overloaded but with a few cans of 80 octane fuel aboard for emergencies) and the LT916 had to leave all their bags and cases behind, except for some small hand luggage, as, after all, there were too many of them. [30]

Also the LT916, which had not been fitted out with an extra fuel tank and was also overloaded, flew direct to Broome and, although Kranenburg had never flown the route to Australia before, it arrived spot on at the bay in front of Broome. After landing, the tanks still contained fuel for only about five minutes' flight. Kranenburg had been given instructions by Winckel and used a map of Australia from a pocket atlas and a sketch of the route from Broome via Geraldton to Perth.

Although one of the L14s of the KNILM shuttled to and fro between Broome and Perth to convey passengers (the other Lockheed 14s of the KNILM transported cargo between Sydney and Broome and passengers from Broome to Sydney) most of the passengers were to go to Perth on the L18s, as the numbers of passengers who were temporarily stranded at Broome had become too great. As was mentioned above, during this night also the DC-3s PK-ALO and PK-AFV flew from Andir to Broome, while the PK-ALW flew back from Port Hedland to Andir with cargo. It was to be the last shipment of cargo to reach Bandung. However, the L18s and DC-3s had already shipped a total of almost ten tons of cargo to Andir. [31]

The PK-ALO had on board four members of the Netherlands East-Indies Government, who were to participate in a government committee to be set up in Melbourne, and three senior civil servants, including Mr. A. H. J. Lovink, the head of the Netherlands East-Indies foreign intelligence service, the Dienst der Oost-Aziatische Zaken – East-Asiatic Affairs Service. The latter posed as a courier of the government and carried with him a stack of top-secret intelligence documents. Incidentally, the DC-3s also transported luggage, including government files, and, in the case of the PK-AFV, a small package containing diamonds belonging to a bank. Apart from the wife and child of Sgt Van Tuijn, Winckel's flight mechanic, the PK-AFV transported a trainee flight engineer of the KNILM and five ML service personnel. The latter were three student pilots, destined for the Flight School at Adelaide, and two pilots, destined for the Boot detachment at Archerfield. They took along their luggage, personal equipment, weapon and parachute. [32]

The number of passengers per DC-3 was relatively small as the captains (still very much aware of their colleagues having gone missing over southern Sumatra) wanted to leave with fully topped up auxiliary fuel tank, if at all possible. As already mentioned, unlike the L18s, the DC-3s were not fitted out with a radio compass, which made determining the position with respect to an airfield such as Broome generally more time-consuming. It might also result in a considerable increase of the flight time, especially in bad weather. On top of that, the military passengers and the senior civil servants had brought along a lot of luggage. The two captains therefore refused to take more than seven passengers per plane as soon as they learned of the second L18 that had become available. This triggered a redistribution of passengers originally allocated to the two

DC-3s, and led to the four experts sent out by the government and the two British women and their children, travelling in Kranenburg's plane. [33]

The aircraft that had flown to Broome arrived there in the middle of a Japanese air raid carried out by Navy O fighter aircraft coming from Timor. The PK-ALO had just landed and the LT918 was waiting to be refueled when the attack began. Both planes were lost, just like all Australian and American aircraft on the airfield. During the attack 2Lt Winckel succeeded in hitting one of the Navy O fighter aircraft with a 7.7 mm machine gun from his L18, upon which the fighter pilot immediately broke off his attack and left the scene. The PK-AFV on its way to Broome was shot down by the Navy Os that were returning from their attack and made an emergency landing on the beach at Carnot Bay. Flight engineer J. F. M. Blaauw and three passengers, Ensign D.A. Hendriksz (student pilot) and Mrs. M. van Tuijn and her one-year old baby were severely wounded in the Japanese attacks and died shortly afterwards. Captain Ivan Smirnoff and ML pilot Sgt L.H. van der Burg were wounded. Only the LT916 was lucky, the crew landing with almost empty tanks shortly after the attack among the debris of exploded aircraft. [34]



Photo 6: Wreckage of the Douglas DC-3 PK-ALO at Broome (Gordon Birkett, RAAFWA collection).

After the LT916 had been refueled, Kranenburg flew his passengers over to Port Hedland, where they went to prepare the reception of the wounded and passengers from the aircraft that had been hit at Broome, and immediately returned to Broome. Subsequently, the LT916 was employed to transfer the wounded to Port Hedland, among them also Americans and Australians from hit aircraft as well as Marine Luchtvaartdienst (Dutch naval air service, MLD) personnel and members of their families who had arrived with flying boats at the Broome roadstead shortly before the air raid. [35] Also Lockheed 14 PK-AFQ of the KNILM, which had come from Perth to pick up passengers, landed shortly after the air raid and began shuttling to and fro Port Hedland. A second L14 (PK-AFM) arrived from Sydney. The DC-3 PK-ALT which arrived from Sydney in the afternoon of 3 March was immediately offloaded and also employed in the evacuation of wounded and passengers in shock from destroyed aircraft. [36] Gradually, more aircraft arrived to offer help, among them the three L18s of the D.VI.A. from Perth. Only the Lockheed 14 PK-AFM of the KNILM left again in the afternoon of 3 March for Sydney with the seven Government members and senior civil servants from the destroyed PK-ALO. [37]

The other ML and KNILM crews employed spent the night with their evacuated passengers at Port Hedland and the following day partly resumed their evacuation of the stranded passengers and crew members of the destroyed aircraft at Broome. The PK-ALT, however, took a full load of evacuees from other planes to Perth, while also the LT916 went there with its passengers in the course of the morning. Guus Winckel flew Lodestar LT924 (2Lt Veenstra's plane) with evacuees from Port Hedland to Perth on 4 March to return to Port Hedland the next day for another such flight to Perth. Veenstra and Lt Welter (the deputy CO of the D.VI.A.) came along as passengers on 4 March to coordinate the evacuation effort at Perth (where they had to find food and organize accommodation for dozens of people and arrange for some help from the RAAF to keep the L18s in the air), while Captain De Mul who arrived at Port Hedland on 4 March (see below) did the same in Port Hedland, organizing, amongst others, shuttle flights with the available L18s and the KNILM L14 between Port Hedland and Broome. The Dutch officers had to arrange things largely by themselves as there was no real effort from the side of the Australian armed forces to coordinate. [38]

The DC-3 PK-ALT was to have flown to Andir in the evening of 3 March, but, in fact, it was in Perth on 4 March. It flew to Port Hedland and back to Perth with a full load of evacuees the next day. In the evening of 5 March Captain De Mul, who had just arrived from Port Hedland, finally gave the order to the crew to carry out the flight to Bandung and back to Australia. This flight was now planned for 6 and 7 March, but this was not to be. The cargo had to be picked up at Broome before flying to Bandung via Port Hedland, but remained at Broome. In the evening of 5 March also 2Lt Winckel received orders to fly to Bandung with the LT924 on 6 March. The cargo flights were already cancelled the next morning as the situation in Java was considered too tenuous, but Winckel, nevertheless, was sent to Bandung to pick up some high-ranking RAF evacuees (see below). [39]

In the mean time, Lodestar LT916 had gone missing on its flight to Perth on 4 March. The route to Perth was completely unknown to the crew of Kranenburg, and, having lost their way after having already gone beyond Geraldton, they were forced to make an emergency landing near the small town of Mingenew due to a shortage of fuel. The plane had not been fully topped off at Port Hedland as fuel was scarce there. The emergency landing went without any problems, although one of the engines quit during the approach. The passengers continued to Perth by train and several Australian army officers arranged a small quantity of fuel, which allowed the LT916 to fly to Geraldton to be refueled the next day. Subsequently, the crew of Kranenburg flew back to Port Hedland in the afternoon of 6 March to help evacuate the stranded passengers there and flew a number of them to Perth on 7 March. Among the passengers there were evacuees from a Boeing B-17 evacuation flight organized by the ML (see below). [40]

In the night of 3 and 4 March 1942 and on the following night three further L18s flew to Australia, this time to Port Hedland with a final destination of Perth. The first to go was the Lodestar LT925 of the crew of Lt Mulder (aviation wireless operator Sgt Van Doorn and flight mechanic Sgt M. Drost), which had just returned to Andir from Bangalore at 05:00 hours in the morning of 3 March. The plane was ferried to the Boeabatoeweg and took off again at 23:30 hrs. The aircraft of the Renaud crew (the LT914, as LT925 fitted out with an extra fuel tank) and the aircraft of the crew of SM W.A. Rademaker (the LT908 without an extra tank) followed in the night of 4 and 5 March, both departing from Boeabatoeweg. The latter two L18s were piloted by

crews that had never before flown the route to Australia and despite the instructions from Lt Corsmit they both made emergency landings. Each of the L18s transported seven passengers, not counting children, most of whom were ML servicemen. They were ML officers who had been transferred to Australia and members of their families insofar as they were married, apart from one American civilian.

Lt Mulder carried seven passengers and two children and flew out Lieutenant-colonel J.J. Zomer (ML Command), two technical officers and Captain De Mul and Res 2Lt Smits van Burgst of the D.VI.A. 2Lt Renaud had Lieutenant-colonel C. Giebel (ML Command) on board, Captain Frits J. W. den Ouden (RMWO4-- Knight of the Military Willems Order 4th class, a Glenn Martin bomber pilot), Captain Reinier E. Jessurun (a Glenn Martin bomber observer-bombardier, recently transferred to ML Command) and a medical officer of the ML. In the aircraft of SM Rademaker Captain A. A. M. van Rest (RMWO4, a fighter pilot), Ensign Jaap C. Meeuwenoord of the D.VI.A. (who had flown impressed civilian airplanes and was employed as a 2nd pilot on L18s), a technical officer and an observer-bombardier were evacuated. Also on board was an American civilian, the director of the General Motors plant in Java. [41]

The Mulder crew made it into Port Hedland without any problems and landed at about 08:00 hrs local time. They were almost immediately employed on the shuttle to Broome to pick up evacuees. Res 2Lt Smits van Burgst took over aircraft LT923 (replacing Lt Welter in its crew) and was sent to Broome as well. Both Lodestars made several shuttle flights before flying full loads of passengers from Port Hedland to Perth in the afternoon of 5 March, Captain De Mul coming along on the LT925. The planned destinations of the LT925 had been Adelaide and Melbourne. LT914 had been planned to load cargo at Broome and fly it back to Bandung via Port Hedland on 5 March, to return to Port Hedland with evacuees the next day, together with one other (unknown) Lodestar. Aircraft LT925 and its crew were held at Perth for the time being, however, and they would not be flying again until 8 March for a trip to Geraldton. The crew was genuinely exhausted, having received very little rest since the take off for the long flight from Bandung to Bangalore on 28 February. [42]



Photo 7: Lodestar LT923 at RAAF Station Pearce in March 1942 (Gordon Birkett, RAAFWA collection).

Not having been able to find their bearings with the help of the radio compass during their approach of Australia, the crews of Renaud and Rademaker both ended up on a barren stretch of coast land without a trace of habitation. Fitted out with the extra fuel tank, the aircraft of the Renaud crew had somewhat more fuel, and although a few cans of fuel that had been taken along were poured into the extra tank by the passengers during flight, it proved to be too little.

Rademaker (gambling that he was to the east of Port Hedland) opted for a westerly course on reaching the coast, but afterwards appeared to have approached the coast to the west of Port Hedland. He landed without fuel in a remote area to the north of Onslow. His passengers reached Port Hedland by RAAF Hudson bomber on 6 March and flew to Perth on Lodestar LT907 (crew De Jongh) and an RAAF Hudson that same day. After some small repairs and with fuel flown in by another Hudson bomber, the LT908 reached Port Hedland in the afternoon of 7 March. Carrying the final group of Dutch evacuees still at Port Hedland, Rademaker flew his Lodestar to Perth on the next day.

As it appeared afterwards, 2Lt Renaud, aviation wireless operator Sgt V. N. Jansen and flight mechanic Sgt J. T. C. Rombouts (assuming they were west of Port Hedland) had in fact ended up north-east of Port Hedland with their passengers. The crew flew along the coast in north-easterly

direction until they recognized *eighty mile beach* (a desolate stretch of beach between Port Hedland and Broome) on the map and realized they were heading the wrong way. Incidentally, the map used came from a pocket atlas with a scale of 1:10,000,000, which all D.VI.A. and KNILM pilots used. With only little fuel in the tanks left, they turned around. The L18 ended up at a small air strip near a sheep farm at Wallal, 200 kilometres east of Port Hedland. The following day Renaud siphoned the remaining fuel of a Dornier flying boat of the MLD (the X-24) stranded at Wallal the day before, and in that way managed to reach Port Hedland. He had also some of the Dornier passengers on board, as this plane had picked up passengers from Dornier X-36 already, which had been lost on a nearby reef. He then flew fuel for the flying boat from Port Hedland to Wallal, picked up his own passengers again at Port Hedland and finally flew to Perth taking along some of the evacuees from the X-24. Renaud was suffering from the after effects of the German measles, however, and fell ill on reaching Geraldton. He succeeded in reaching Perth on 7 March, nevertheless. [43]

Apart from two L18 aircraft (the LT909 and the LT917, both returned from Bangalore on 3 March) kept at Java together with a KNILM DC-3 (the PK-ALW) for a final evacuation of senior Government officials and service personnel, the evacuation of the Lodestars was complete on 5 March 1942. Only some family members of D.VI.A. personnel already in Australia (including the crews of the Lodestars that had left in the night of 3 and 4 March and the following night) and a few family members of the crews of the above-mentioned two L18s still had to be evacuated. They would, for the most part, make the trip in an American B-17E bomber (the 41-2460). This plane, although written off by the USAAF after having incurred heavy damage in a Japanese air raid on Andir on 19 February 1942, had been repaired after all from around 26 February by the Technical Service of the ML. On 1 March 1942 the Technical Service received the order to prepare the B-17 as soon as possible for flight in order to transport evacuees to Australia. The D.VI.A. pilot Gerald L. (Lee) Cherymisin (the only one of a group of four American civilian contract L18 pilots to have renewed his contract with the ML after the outbreak of the war) and the Technical Service test pilot Sub Lt Sibolt J. Kok (who during the war days had often stood in as Lodestar pilot), together with the American flight mechanic Tech Sgt Henry Hayes, flew the plane to Port Hedland in the morning of 5 March. At 04:10 hrs they took off with 23 passengers on board, among them the remaining family members of the D.VI.A.

personnel (apart from two, see below), some family members of other ML personnel already in Australia, the wife and two children of Kok and Cherymisin's wife, two ML officers (Res Capt Anton Schoolwerth and Res Lt Arie J. A. Geurtz, former liaison officers with USAAF units in Java, the former with his wife and child) and three American servicemen.

During the take-off Kok illuminated the instrument panel with a flashlight as the lighting in the plane did not work. The landing gear had to be retracted manually and also the bomb bay doors slowly opened during flight and had to be closed (more than once) manually, too. The electric instruments did not function and one previously repaired engine, which was trembling heavily, had to be switched off as they were underway. The landing of the B-17 went without problems at Port Hedland, but no flaps could be used (they did not function, either), and the crew continued their journey to Perth the following day. Most passengers were left behind at Port Hedland, and they were to be picked up by a Lockheed 14 of the KNILM or to travel to Perth by L18 of the D.VI.A. Only Kok, Cherymisin, Hayes and the three American servicemen went on. On their way to Perth, however, the pilots (with no flight map, except for a map torn out of a school atlas) lost their bearings and the B-17 ran out of fuel as it had not been refueled at Port Hedland because there had been no 100 octane fuel available there. On 6 March 1942 Cherymisin made a successful emergency landing in a field near Geraldton, where Kok telephoned the D.VI.A. at Perth for help. L18s flew the crew and passengers from Geraldton and Port Hedland to Perth on 6 and 7 March. The B-17 was returned to the USAAF on or around 8 March. On 13 March an American captain arrived at Geraldton with a repair crew. [44]

Final evacuation

The PK-ALW took off on 7 March at around 01:00 hrs. After its arrival from Australia, this plane had been kept on stand-by at the Boeabatoeweg since the early hours of 3 March. The crew consisted of Captain E. Dunlop, flight engineer J. H. W. Belie and aviation wireless operator K. W. F. Groothoff. On board were Lieutenant-Governor-General Dr. Van Mook, the former governor of eastern Java C. O. van der Plas (affiliated with the foreign intelligence service of the Government), a journalist accompanied by his wife, a group of KNILM personnel, consisting of two flight engineers and one ground engineer with his wife, and the wives of the pilot and the flight mechanic of the Lodestar LT909. The wives and children of the KNILM and ML

personnel that came along on this day evacuated with special permission from the acting ML Commander, Colonel E.T. Kengen. The evacuating civil servants, however, did not have permission to evacuate the members of their families. The DC-3 took off with only ten passengers on board, two places (on the cabin floor) remaining unoccupied as one KNILM employee failed to show up and could not be traced, upon which his wife also left the plane. [45]

The departure of the DC-3 and the two L18s which had been held on stand-by at the Boeabatoeweg was originally to have taken place a day earlier, but Van Mook stalled his departure and on leaving even asked the Governor-General for a written order to leave, which he got. In the end the take off of the PK-ALW on 7 March was also somewhat delayed as it proved difficult to move the DC-3 (bigger and heavier than an L18) from its shelter position to the runway. [46]

At 02:05 hrs the LT909 of the Jansen crew (Lt Joop Jansen, flight mechanic Sgt T. Inkenhaag and aviation wireless operator Sgt F. C. Weber) took off with seven passengers and so did at 02:30 hrs the LT917 of the Arens crew (Res 2Lt Herman Arens, flight mechanic SM P. J. Bouten and aviation wireless operator Sgt J. A. van Zanten) also with seven passengers, among whom Major-General L. H. van Oyen, former Commanding-General of the disbanded allied Java Air Command, and his adjutant Res Lt H. Creutzberg. [47]

The passengers of the Jansen crew were three staff officers of the Algemeen Hoofdkwartier (General Headquarters –AHK) of the Commanding-General KNIL, along with four student pilots. One or two civil servants who had originally been assigned to Jansen were relocated to a third L18, which had become available after 2Lt Winckel had landed (see below). In the other L18 were (apart from Van Oyen and Creutzberg) three staff officers of the AHK, the ML (Lieutenant-Colonel Prof. Dr. G. Otten, M.Sc., the Head of the Technical Service of the ML) and the Royal Netherlands Navy, a flight surgeon (Captain A.R. Best, transferred to the ML Flight School at Parafield) and a general duty officer (2Lt G. van Rijn, destined to become lieutenant-adjutant of Captain Boot at Archerfield). One or two other civil servants from this aircraft were also relocated to Winckel's plane. [48]

The transport aircraft, all fitted out with an extra fuel tank in the cabin, took eight (the DC-3) to eight and a quarter/ eight and a half hours (the L18s) to complete the journey. After having refueled at Port Hedland, they immediately flew on to Perth, a flight of another four to four and a half hours. At Port Hedland each plane took along a few additional passengers, all evacuees of earlier flights, including flights to Australia by the Dutch naval air service.

2Lt Winckel was to make a last flight from Port Hedland to the Boeabatoeweg to pick up three senior officers of the RAF. He left Perth in the morning of 6 March. At Perth Winckel was the only pilot with experience on the route to Bandung available and considered still (reasonably) fit for flying, although he had a wounded forearm. Sergeant Maks flew along as his regular aviation wireless operator, while Sgt Borgmeijer (of the Kranenburg crew) stood in as flight mechanic for his colleague Van Tuijn. The LT924, a plane without an extra tank, was used for the flight which made it possible to carry some extra passengers. The L18 arrived safely at Bandung around midnight of 6 and 7 March after a journey of around fourteen hours (including a short stopover at Port Hedland). Apart from the RAF officers (there appeared to be only two as Air Vice-Marshal P. C. Maltby did not show up), Guus Winckel was assigned some civil servants and RAF fighter pilots as passengers. [49]

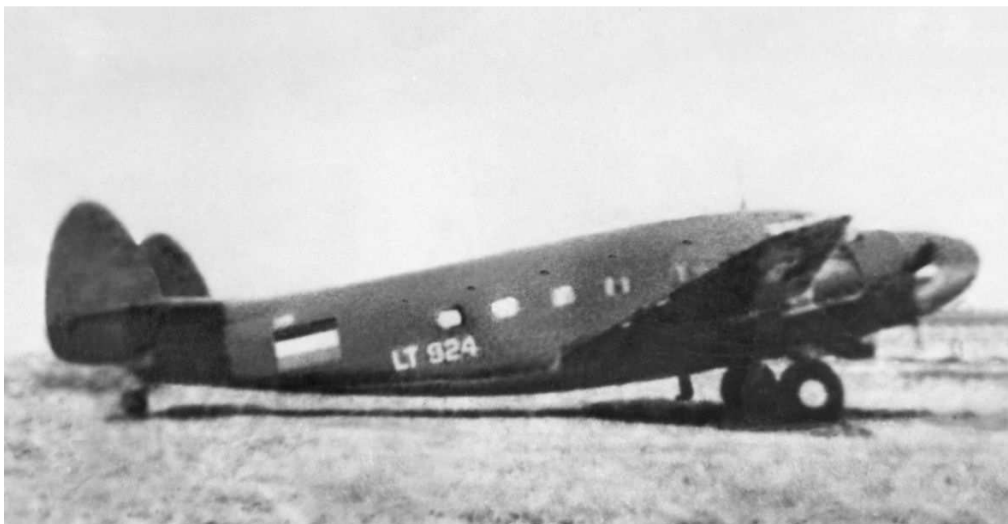


Photo 8: Lodestar LT924 flown by 2Lt Guus Winckel photographed at Port Hedland on 6 or 7 March 1942 (G.J. Casius collection).

The assignment of passengers over the (now) four transport planes, however, was adjusted. The LT924 was the last transport plane to leave the Boeabatoeweg on 7 March at 03:00 hrs, with as passengers seven civil servants, the ML officers Res Lt Harry H. J. Simons (a fighter pilot) and Glenn Martin observer-bombardier Lt Klaas Akkerman (both unmarried and approached shortly before midnight if they would volunteer to come along), four fighter pilots of 242 Squadron RAF and Squadron Leader R. E. P. Brooker of the RAF. They had to leave behind almost all their luggage and also passenger Wing Commander H. J. Maguire of the RAF, who had disembarked to go looking for Maltby and who had not made it back to the plane at the take off time. One of the four RAF pilots had not been on the passenger list but the crew took him along anyway. The L18 landed safely at Port Hedland at around 11:15 hrs (MJT –Central Java Time, 11:45 hrs local time). After his crew members had refueled the plane, Winckel, too, flew immediately on to Perth. [50]

After the capitulation

After the capitulation of the KNIL on 8 March (effective the next day) the L18s remained at Perth, operating out of RAAF Station Pearce and using the nearby civilian Maylands aerodrome for parking aircraft. The Lodestars shuttled to and fro between Perth and Adelaide (with stopovers at Kalgoorlie and Forrest) to evacuate passengers. From Adelaide DC-5s of the KNILM flew on Melbourne. [51] Thus, on 9 March SM Rademaker flew ten ML student fighter pilots, who had arrived by ship at Perth, to Kalgoorlie and the following day on to Adelaide. Lt Jansen, Lt Mulder, Res 2Lt Arens and 2Lt Winckel, too, on the same days took their passengers with some additions to Adelaide via Kalgoorlie. Six young ML pilots, who had followed a training course for 1st pilot on the Lockheed L212 at Kalidjati and who had arrived by ship at Perth, joined the trainee fighter pilots on their way to the Flight School of the ML at Adelaide. On 12 March several Lodestars again took off from Perth to transport ML personnel arrived by ship and civilian evacuees to Adelaide. The crew of Sub Lt Kranenburg flew Major-General Van Oyen and a few staff officers via Mascot to Laverton (Melbourne) and the next day to Parafield (Adelaide). The general informed the ML personnel and the students of the ML Flight School of the capitulation of the KNIL and the allied troops in Java. In the period of 14 to 16 March most of the Lodestars at Perth made one more flight to Adelaide and back to Perth. The three KNILM

aircraft in Western Australia left for Sydney on or about 8 March, also taking along some military evacuees to Adelaide and Melbourne. The DC-3 PK-ALW left for Adelaide with evacuees on 8 March with destination Sydney as well, but at Adelaide it was directed back to Perth for another flight with military and civilian evacuees to Adelaide. It was the final KNILM airplane to reach Sydney on 14 March. [52]

On 17 March 1942 the remaining eleven L18s were sold to the USAAF. The planes were transferred in the period between 18 and 21 March 1942 to a Depot Group of the USAAF at Essendon (Melbourne). The LT919 and the LT921 were ferried from Laverton to Essendon to be transferred to the Americans as well, the LT919 on 19 March by Lt Jansen and flight mechanic Sgt J. A. Rijks. The D.VI.A. personnel in Australia received some well deserved leave and were then transferred to the ML Flight School at Adelaide or 18 Squadron NEI at Canberra, the ML B-25C Mitchell unit formed on 4 April 1942. [53]



Photo 9: Former LT909 of the D.VI.A. when serving with the USAAF in Australia in 1944 (Gordon Birkett, RAAFWA collection).

The Lodestars had played an extremely important role during the war period and had been used exceptionally intensively. As a result the crews made an enormous number of flying hours and the pilots and aviation wireless operators who had been assigned from December 1941 up to and including March 1942 flew between 350 and 450 hours in this period, including a limited number of hours on Lockheed L12A/L212 aircraft. Flight mechanics flew a little less in the same

28

period, as for flights over Java a number of mechanics stood in as reserve crew members. Up to and including 3 March 1942 the transport planes of the D.Vl.A. and the DC-3s of the KNILM had transported almost ten tons of cargo to Bandung and from the night of 2 and 3 March 1942 onwards a total of about 135 persons had been evacuated to Australia by the L18s, the B-17 bomber and the DC-3s of the KNILM. [54]

Notes

[1] J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; V.N. Jansen, letter to author 27 May 1984.

[2] J.A.J. Ooninx, interview by author, 20 October 1984; logbooks of J.A.J. Ooninx, J. van Doorn and J. Jansen; G. van Messel, interview series by author, July 1990; Bill Bartsch, e-mail to author, 1 July 2007; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door* (Bakenes: Haarlem, 1972), p. 108.

[3] Diary of A. Hagers, via R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland, Esq; questionnaire SLH A. Hagers, Ward collection, archives of the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH, hereafter NIMH); J.A.J. Ooninx, interview by author, 20 October 1984; G. van Messel, interview series by author, July 1990; J.C. Bijkerk, *Vaarwel tot betere tijden: Documentaire over de ondergang van Nederlands-Indië* (T. Wever BV: Franeker, 1974), p. 171, gives a partially incorrect account.

[4] G. van Messel, interview series by author, July 1990.

[5] Ibid.; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; logbook of J. Jansen; logbook of J. van Doorn; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 112-113, states erroneously that Van Messel arrived at Broome on Saturday morning 21 February 1942.

[6] G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 112-113; logbooks of J. Jansen and J. van Doorn; G. van Messel, interview series by author, July 1990; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984.

[7] Logbook of J.A.J. Ooninx; J.A.J. Ooninx, interview by author, 20 October 1984; J.C. Bijkerk, *Vaarwel tot betere tijden*, p. 171, does not portray a completely correct picture.

[8] H.J.A.C. Arens, letter to O.G. Ward, 17 October 1987; W.F.A. Winckel, interviews by R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland, Esq, period 1962-1963; diary of R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland, Esq with regard to the flight of the LT909, the LT917 and the LT925 to Bangalore; AHQFE 540 (AIR 24/504) file, Public Record Office, London with regard to the damage to the Lodestar at Semplak.

[9] J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1990; S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988; P.J. Bouten, letter to author, 15 June 1984 and follow-up interview July 1984; V.N. Jansen, letter to author, 27 May 1984 and follow-up interview 31 May 1984.

[10] S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 112, 118.

[11] S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, p. 118.

[12] S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; B.J. Fiedeldij, interview by author, 1975.

[13] G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, p. 119; S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984.

[14] J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; René Wittert, *Het vergeten Squadron: Het verhaal van de Nederlandse vliegers die tegen Japan hun vergeten strijd vochten* (Van Holkema & Warendorf: Bussem, 1976), pp. 180, 182.

[15] H. J.A.C. Arens, letter to O.G. Ward, 17 October 1987; Bill Bartsch, e-mails to author 7 August 2007 and 7 September 2007.

[16] G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 118-119, on page 118 Hagens incorrectly states 24 February 1942 as the date of departure of the PK-AFV; Bill Bartsch, e-mail to author, 7 September 2007; <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NEI-Aviation>, message 8 July 2007.

[17] G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, p. 123; J. Boon, interview by G.J. Hagens, circa 1970 (with thanks to G.J. Hagens).

[18] G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 124, 126-128, 132; the PK-AFZ was the only DC-3 without an extra tank in the cabin.

[19] Report of B.J. Fiedeldij, 1946 (NIMH, collection Veuger/De Smalen); B.J. Fiedeldij, interview by author, 1975; H.J.A.C. Arens, letter to O.G. Ward, 17 October 1987; P.C. Boer et al, *De luchtstrijd om Indië, Operaties van de Militaire Luchtvaart KNIL in de periode December 1941-Maart 1942* (Houten: Unieboek, 1990), pp. 263-264, erroneously mentions an incorrect date of departure and wrongly states that both officers travelled with Australian civilian airplanes from Broome (this is only correct for B.J. Fiedeldij and his family).

[20] B.J. Fiedeldij, interview by author, 1975; S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968.

[21] Questionnaire SLH J.E. de Jongh, Ward collection, archives NIMH; flying hours summary J.E. de Jongh (via Guus van Oorschot).

[22] S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; questionnaire SLH J.E. de Jongh, Ward collection, archives NIMH; J.E. de Jongh, interview series by author, September 1990.

[23] L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Vol. 11a, Part I, 2nd half ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij, 1984, hereafter L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*), p. 1016 note 1, pp. 1024-1025, 1026 note 1, mentions an incorrect date for the departure of Warners and Jansen and states incorrectly that Lovink travelled by Lodestar; Robert D. Haslach, *Nishi No Kaze, Hare: Nederlands-Indische Inlichtingendienst contra aggressor Japan* (Van Kampen & Zn: Weesp, 1985, hereafter Robert D. Haslach, *Nishi No Kaze, Hare*), p. 209; Questionnaire SLH J.E. de Jongh, Ward collection, archives NIMH; J.E. de Jongh, interview series by author, September 1990; S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; information received from Bart de Jongh (via Guus van Oorschot) about the flight of LT921 to Broome and from Broome to Cloncurry. Mentioned L18 serials are confirmed by the flying hours summary of J.E. de Jongh of September 1942 (for LT907) and A50 forms of RAAF Stations Pearce and Archerfield (Australian National Archives, location Canberra, via Gordon Birkett).

[24] S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; J.E. de Jongh, interview series by author, September 1990 (De Jongh flew out Warners, who transferred to the plane flown by P. van Buuren at Broome); J.A.J. Oonincx, interview by author, 20 October 1984; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, p. 1016 note 1, pp. 1024-1025, 1026 note 1, mentions an incorrect date for the departure of Warners and Jansen; military register J. Blickman (via NIMH); questionnaires SLH of J.E. de Jongh and G. Treffers, Ward collection, archives NIMH; A50 forms RAAF Station Archerfield, entry 4 March 1942 (Australian National Archives, location Canberra, via Gordon Birkett); information received from Bart de Jongh about the flight of LT921 (via Guus van Oorschot); information received from Gordon Birkett about the crash of Robert Oestreicher; see Robert D. Haslach, *Nishi No Kaze, Hare*, p. 40 for information with regard to Lovink.

[25] P.C. Boer et al, *De luchtstrijd om Indië*, pp. 207-208; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 141-148.

[26] J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid; J.C. Renaud, interview by G.J. Hagens, circa 1970 (with thanks to G.J. Hagens); P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988.

[29] Jan van Apeldoorn, *Departure delayed* (Robertson & Mullens: Melbourne, 1943), pp. 207-212; J.C. Renaud, interview by G.J. Hagens, circa 1970 (with thanks to G.J. Hagens); G.J.

Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, p. 160; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988.

[30] Jan van Apeldoorn, *Departure delayed*, pp. 207-212; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988; military service records of the military evacuees of Winckel (via NIMH).

[31] P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, p. 161; S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968.

[32] J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, p. 1016 note 1, pp. 1024-1025, 1026 note 1, mentions an incorrect date for the departure of Lovink and states incorrectly that he travelled by Lodestar; Robert D. Haslach, *Nishi No Kaze, Hare*, p. 211 (wrongly mentions that the airplane of Lovink was shot down); G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 160-161; W.H. Tyler, a. o., *Flight of diamonds* (Carlisle: W. Australia, 1987), appendix E (erroneously states that the ML pilots were of the MLD); Mervin W. Prime, *WA's Pearl Harbor: The Japanese raid on Broome* (s.l., s.a.), pp. 13 ff.

[33] Jan van Apeldoorn, *Departure delayed*, p. 210 (mentions the redistribution of passengers, but is not fully correct about who went where); J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988.

[34] G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 163-167, 170-172, 176; Jan van Apeldoorn, *Departure delayed*, pp. 213-216; W.H. Tyler, a.o., *Flight of diamonds*, appendix E (erroneously states that the ML pilots were of the MLD); Mervin W. Prime, *WA's Pearl Harbor*, pp. 13 ff; P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988.

[35] Jan van Apeldoorn, *Departure delayed*, pp. 216-217; P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988.

[36] G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 172-175.

[37] Questionnaire SLH J.E. de Jongh, Ward collection, archives NIMH; J.E. de Jongh, interview series by author, September 1990; P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988.

[38] Jan van Apeldoorn, *Departure delayed*, p. 218; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 174-175; S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; A50 forms RAAF Station Pearce (Australian National Archives, location Canberra, via Gordon Birkett); information about the flight of LT924 received from Peter Ingman.

[39] P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 175-176.

[40] P. Borgmeijer, interview with author, 3 April 1988; Jan van Apeldoorn, *Departure delayed*, pp. 218-219.

[41] Diary entries A.A.M. van Rest (with thanks to the Van Rest family); logbook of J. van Doorn; military registers of the military evacuees (via NIMH); questionnaires SLH J.P. Alberding and J.J. Zomer, and reports of C. Giebel and R.E. Jessurun, Ward collection, archives NIMH (Jessurun mentions incorrectly 6 March as date of departure, probably derived from his military register card which was reconstructed after the war); S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; J. Meeuwenoord, interview by Wibo Burgers, 2001 (with thanks to Wibo Burgers, confirms that part of his evacuation was by RAAF Hudson bomber). The Military Willems Order is the highest military decoration of the Netherlands.

[42] S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; logbook J. van Doorn (does not mention the shuttle flights and consequently gives an incorrect date for the flight via Geraldton to Perth); A50 forms RAAF Station Pearce (confirms the arrival dates of the Lodestars at Pearce, Australian National Archives, location Canberra, via Gordon Birkett); see also Christopher Shores and Brian Cull with Yasuho Izawa, *Bloody Shambles: The First Comprehensive Account of Air Operations Over South East Asia December 1941-May 1942*, Volume Two, *The Defence of Sumatra to the Fall of Burma* (London: Grub Street, 1993, hereafter Chr. Shores et al, *Bloody Shambles*), p. 321, the mentioned evacuation of pilots of 242 Squadron was called off.

[43] P.C. Boer et al, *De luchtstrijd om Indië*, pp. 227, 240; René Wittert, *Het vergeten squadron*, p. 132; Jan Hagens, *Kemajoran: Nederlands-Indisch luchttransport tijdens de roerige jaren 1945-1950* (Bergen, NH: Bonneville, 1993), pp. 56-58; J.C. Renaud, interview by G.J. Hagens, circa 1970 (with thanks to G.J. Hagens); F.J.W. den Ouden, interview by author, 24 August 1987; J.E. de Jongh, interview series by author, September 1990; J. Meeuwenoord, interview by Wibo Burgers, 2001 (with thanks to Wibo Burgers); information about the flight of LT908 received from Peter Ingman.

[44] P.C. Boer et al, *De luchtstrijd om Indië*, pp. 241-242, the name of the 1st pilot, however, is spelled incorrectly here and the date of the emergency landing is mistaken; E. Rogers, e-mail to author, 18 November 2006 with, amongst others, a report of G.L. Cherymisin, 1946. Modern U.S. bombers such as the B-17, contrary to the Lockheed Hudsons of the RAAF and the Glenn Martin 139/166 bombers of the ML, used 100 octane fuel instead of 80 octane fuel.

[45] G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, pp. 184-185; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; H.J.A.C. Arens, letter to O.G. Ward, 17 October 1987.

[46] L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, pp. 1028-1029; H.J.A.C. Arens, letter to O.G. Ward, 17 October 1987; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984.

[47] P.C. Boer et al, *De luchtstrijd om Indië*, pp. 247-248; H. Creutzberg, LL.M., interview series by author, February 1975; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series by author, September 1984; P.J. Bouten, letter to author, 15 June 1984 and follow-up interview July 1984; logbook of J. Jansen.

[48] Logbook of J. Jansen; military register data A.R. Best, physician, J. Ketting, E. Guillaume, J. de Serriere and G. van Rijn (via NIMH); diary of E. Guillaume; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, pp. 1028-1029; H. Creutzberg, LL.M., interview series by author, February 1975.

[49] P.C. Boer et al, *De luchtstrijd om Indië*, pp. 247-248; H.H.J. Simons, letters to author, 3 April 1991 and 17 August 1991; H.J.A.C. Arens, letter to O.G. Ward, 17 October 1987; J.P.G.F. Corsmit, interview series with author, September 1984; P. Borgmeijer, interview with author, 3 April 1988.

[50] P.C. Boer et al, *De luchtstrijd om Indië*, pp. 247-248; Chr. Shores et al, *Bloody Shambles*, pp. 331-332; H.H.J. Simons, letters to author, 3 April 1991 and 17 August 1991 (Simons could partially hear the conversation which Maguire had with Colonel E.T. Kengen. This was not about offloading the luggage again, as Shores states, but about the absence of Maltby. Kengen several times said, "I do not understand", upon which Maguire left, probably to find a telephone); K. Akkerman, interview by author, January 1986.

[51] Logbook of J. Jansen; logbook of J. van Doorn; S. de Mul, interview by author, 1968; V.N. Jansen, letter to author, 27 May 1984 and follow-up interview 31 May 1984; P. Borgmeijer, interview by author, 3 April 1988.

[52] Logbooks of J. Jansen, J. van Doorn and A.J. van der Heiden; ; A.J. van der Heiden, interview series by author, May 1984; W.J. Holswilder, interview by author, 10 May 1984; F. Florentinus, interview by author, 7 May 1984; K. Akkerman, interview by author, January 1986; H. Creutzberg, LL.M., interview series by author, February 1975; H.H.J. Simons, letters to author 3 April 1991 and 17 August 1991; G.J. Hagens, *De KNILM vloog door*, p. 196.

[53] Report on a conference held on the 17 March 1942, between Lieutenant-General Brett, Dr. Van Mook, Mr. Hoogstraten (Director of Economic Affairs), Colonel Giebel, Major Roos, Group Captain Gatty and Colonel Perrin (via G.J. Casius); logbook of J. Jansen; J.A.J. Oonincx, interview by author, 20 October 1984.

[54] Derived from data obtained from S. de Mul, H.J.A.C. Arens, P.J. Bouten, P. Borgmeijer, V.N. Jansen and J.P.G.F. Corsmit; logbooks of J. Jansen, J. van Doorn and J.A.J. Oonincx. Reader is advised that pilots posted to 18 Squadron NEI who had lost their logbooks made up flying hours summaries in September 1942 showing the rather arbitrary number of 600 Lodestar

flying hours (summaries of W.F.A. Winckel and J.E. de Jongh). In view of the number of flying hours of the L18 aircraft when transferred to the USAAF a maximum of 450 seems correct.

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