

Netherlands East Indies Air Transport units of the Militaire Luchtvaart KNIL (Army Aviation Corps of the Royal NEI Army) and their aircraft in Australia and Java, 16 January 1943-1 November 1946

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Preface

Research aim and research questions

Although it is well known that the Militaire Luchtvaart (ML, the Army Aviation Corps) of the Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger (KNIL, the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army) in the period of April 1942-January 1946 operated as part of the Royal Australian Air Force with two combat squadrons, No 18 Squadron N.E.I. equipped with North American B-25 Mitchell medium-bombers and No 120 Squadron N.E.I. fighter squadron with Curtiss P-40 Warhawks, it is hardly known that the ML in the mentioned period also operated two transport Flights. These were the Transport Afdeeling Brisbane (Transport Unit Brisbane) and the Transport Section Melbourne which both became a Transport Squadron on 1 September 1944. The two squadrons were, on 7 November 1944, combined into No 1 N.E.I. Transport Squadron (1 N.E.I.T.S.) based at Archerfield, Brisbane. On 15 August 1945 this unit became No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron of the RAAF. May the latter unit designation ring a distant bell hardly any reader will have heard of the ML RAPWI Detachment formed on 1 October 1945 at Kemajoran, Java or the Base Ops Andir unit established at Andir, Java on 1 May 1946. Aim of this paper is to bring the stories of the afore mentioned ML air transport units to the attention of those interested in WWII military aviation history.

The paper looks at the origins of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron and reviews its history and that of its predecessors, their development and growth, despite difficulties with manning, the procurement of aircraft and aircraft maintenance. It further reviews the development of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron into a very large transport unit in the period of January 1946 up to November 1946 and looks at the history of the two above mentioned

improvised ML transport and communication units established in Java after VJ Day. Besides being a descriptive detailed piece of military aviation history, this paper has a strong logistical component and is focused on personnel and material (equipment) issues.

Introduction

Rebuilding the ML after the capitulation of the allied forces in Java and the establishment of transport units in Australia and Java

From 14 February, three weeks before the fall of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) on 8 March 1942, the ML/KNIL had evacuated as much of its personnel to Australia as it could without reducing its remaining combat strength needed for the final battles. The main part of the Depot Vliegtuigafdeeling (Depot aircraft unit), the air transport unit of the ML, ended up at Perth with eleven Lockheed L18 Lodestars. Also evacuated were the students and instructors of the Flying School and a group of student observers and bombardiers of the Observer School. All to go to the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School (RNMFS) in the U.S.A. later. Groups of ferry crews were sent to Australia and British India and were stranded there because of the capitulation. The larger part of the KNILM (Royal Netherlands Indies Airline) and the KLM (Royal Dutch Airline) aircraft and personnel seconded to the KNILM were evacuated to Australia as well. Both the ML and the KNILM/KLM sold their evacuated aircraft in Australia to United States authorities in Australia.

After the sale of its remaining aircraft a large part of the KNILM/KLM personnel in Australia was called up into military service to strengthen the Dutch Naval Air Service and the ML/KNIL-in-exile. In the course of May 1942 the first groups of personnel were called up by the ML. Especially the KNILM ground personnel was most welcome as the number of ML personnel available early May in Australia, British India and in the U.S.A. was only approximately 640 of which the majority were flying personnel and student pilots. The first two ML units which became operational again after the fall of Java were 18 Squadron N.E.I. of the RAAF established at Canberra on 4 April 1942 and the Transport Afdeeling Brisbane (T.A. Brisbane) established on 16 January 1943 and attached to the U.S. Fifth Air Force.



One of the former ML L18 Lodestars (VHCAC, ex LT909) in 1944. This aircraft was initially operated by 22nd Transport Squadron of the USAAF and from October 1942 as a DAT Pool aircraft by Guinea Airways (via Gordon Birkett and Gerard Casius).

In August 1945 the total of ML personnel in Australia had grown to 1,225 including some Dutch Naval Air Service personnel seconded to the ML and the first 333 war volunteers from the Netherlands who arrived in June and July 1945. Before the arrival of the war volunteers recruited in the liberated parts of the Netherlands the ML had only been able to gradually add small numbers of volunteers from other parts of the KNIL as well as a few from the Royal Netherlands Army in the United Kingdom, the Dutch and NEI merchant navy, liberated PoWs, men escaped from the occupied Netherlands, volunteers and enlisted men from Dutch Surinam and the Antilles and enlisted men from Dutch ancestry called up in Australia, the U.S.A., Canada and South Africa. The majority of these men were trained in RAAF Schools. Most of the available ML personnel was still flying personnel as only a limited number of ground personnel was evacuated before the fall of Java and the numbers gradually added after March 1942 had been relatively small. The RAAF did help but had shortages itself as it was busy carrying out an expansion plan. The RAAF eventually had around 730 men (ground personnel and a small number of air gunners) with two operational NEI squadrons and a NEI Personnel and Equipment Pool in August 1945.

In 1944 the ML/KNIL in Australia had become a small Army air corps again consisting of a medium-bomber squadron (the already mentioned No 18 Squadron N.E.I.), a fighter squadron (No 120 Squadron N.E.I., established on 10 December 1943) and a N.E.I. Personnel and Equipment Pool (N.E.I.-P.E.P., established on 1 September 1943). The afore mentioned units were integrated in the RAAF and manned in part with RAAF personnel. A non-integrated Transport Squadron was in part manned with Australian civilian ground personnel (1 N.E.I.T.S.). One of the predecessors of the latter unit was the above mentioned Transport Afdeeling Brisbane which later became an independent NEI squadron (2 N.E.I.T.S.) under NEI control and was absorbed by the original 1 N.E.I.T.S. (formerly Transport Section Melbourne) on 7 November 1944. Apart from the T.A. Brisbane (which flew USAAF aircraft) all units almost exclusively used American aircraft delivered to the NEI on Lend-Lease terms: North American B-25 Mitchells, Curtiss P-40 Warhawks, Lockheed C-60 Lodestars and Douglas C-47 Dakotas. Only some Lockheed L12As and one of the C-47s were NEI owned.

On 15 August 1945 also 1 N.E.I.T.S. became a RAAF squadron, titled 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron RAAF, equipped at that time with 13 Douglas C-47A and Bs, eight North American TB-25C and Ds (Mitchell bombers converted for freight carrying) and three Lockheed L12As. The ML/KNIL also had five Lockheed C-60As in its strength but these were all loaned to the RAAF. In September 1945 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron made its first (relief) flights to the NEI for the RAPWI organization (Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees). From January 1946 the unit was greatly enlarged, receiving up to and including October 1946 40 additional Dakotas, apart from a DC-3D bought from Douglas all bought from USAAF surplus stocks by the NEI Department of Public Works. The Department also leased four surplus Douglas C-54s. Total personnel strength grew from approximately 265 (including 110 Australian civilians) on VJ Day to approximately 500 (including about 300 mostly Australian civilians) in January 1946. Apart from additional civilian personnel also groups of retrained liberated PoWs and war volunteers from the Netherlands had been added to the strength. The main part of the squadron was transferred from Archerfield, Brisbane to Kemajoran, Batavia in Java in August 1946.

Two improvised transport and communication units were formed after VJ Day. First established on 1 October 1945 was the ML RAPWI Detachment which supported the so-called RAPWI Air Department in carrying out relief flights with TB-25s. It was based at Kemajoran, Java and dissolved on approximately 1 April 1946. Mid-April 1946 the Base Ops Andir unit also called Reconnaissance and Communication unit was formed at Andir, Java equipped with surrendered Japanese Ki54, Ki57 and L2D communication and transport aircraft. It was officially established as part of the Andir airbase organization on 1 May 1946. The latter unit supported the NEI/Dutch army force (with communication, reconnaissance and photo reconnaissance flights) deploying in Java at that time. During October-November 1946 it also used two Lockheed C-60 Lodestars and a Lockheed L12A as the Japanese aircraft were nearing the end of their useful life.

In November 1946 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron was already busy with preparations for a cast off of the strictly military work to the forming (officially established on 1 December 1946) 20 Transport Squadron at Tjililitan, Java. This squadron also took over from the Base Ops Andir unit which was disbanded in November. No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron became a semi-military interim NEI airline which employed a large number of civilian flying and ground personnel including Australians, Brits and Americans. Embedded in the squadron was the so-called NIGAT, the Netherlands Indies Government Air Transport, an agency of the NEI Department of Public Works. It remained an ML squadron for the time being with also a sizable military personnel component but with a strong influence of the NEI Department of Public Works on its operations.

The N.E.I. Transport Afdeeling Brisbane and 2 N.E.I. Transport Squadron

Organizing the Transport Afdeeling Brisbane

The first NEI air transport unit formed after the fall of Java was the N.E.I. Transport Afdeeling Brisbane (T.A. Brisbane, Transport Unit Brisbane) which was established at Archerfield, Brisbane on 16 January 1943. It was an administrative NEI unit which administered initially eight pilots, four aviation wireless operators, a second pilot-air gunner and eight flight

engineers of which three to be cross-trained as 2nd pilots. All were former KNILM personnel and KLM personnel seconded to the KNILM evacuated from the NEI in February-March 1942. All had ended up jobless in May 1942 after about one and a half month of charter flying in Australia following the capitulation of the allied forces in Java. The Allied Air Force SWPA had only been interested in the evacuated NEI transport aircraft and not in the personnel at the time. [1]

Apart from a group of flight engineers and aviation wireless operators called up by the Dutch Naval Air Service the majority of the KNILM ground personnel including a number of the flight engineers was quickly called into active military service by the ML in May and June 1942. As far as this concerned KLM personnel the former pending an okay from the Dutch government-in-exile in the U.K. All were transferred to the forming 18 Squadron N.E.I. at Canberra. Also one of the KLM pilots, reserve officer pilot of the ML/KNIL Elt J.J. van Balkom, was called up and went to 18 Squadron N.E.I. in the same period. More pilots were not needed at the unit at the time. [2] But what to do with the remaining (mostly older) flying personnel?

Early September 1942 approximately ten crews were still available. After discussions with MajGen G. Kenney (CG Allied Air Force SWPA) the remaining flying personnel could be seconded to the USAAF to fly a regular service between Cairo and Calcutta. The Dutch Government-in-exile in London objected, however, as the personnel had to be militarised. The KLM in the West Indies had to be strengthened but a number of the pilots had no interest in a transfer. The majority of the pilots and crew members wanted to fly for the USAAF or the allied Directorate of Air Transport (DAT) of the Allied Air Force SWPA Headquarters in Australia. The Dutch Government-in-exile proposed a few other solutions but these plans led to nothing. [3]

In the mean time the number of pilots and crew members available dwindled fast. Four of the younger pilots (Elt M.S. Rab, P.A. Deenik, A.G. Ekels and J. Hofman) and one of the aviation wireless operators (Adj D.K.R. Sweitser) volunteered for military service with 18 Squadron N.E.I. and were transferred to this unit in September-October 1942. Ten flight engineers (including Sgts J. Gijzemijter, H. Schultz and A.F. van Rassel) were transferred to 18 Squadron N.E.I. in September as were

two student flight engineers (Sgt A.J. Bruins and Kpl L. van de Graaf) in October. [4] A few others wanted to go to KLM in the West Indies after



Former KNILM DC-5 PK-ADD was initially operated by the 21st Transport Squadron USAAF in Brisbane and as a DAT Pool aircraft by Australian National Airways from December 1942 (collection Gordon Birkett).

all. The DAT eventually came to the rescue thanks to the very good relations of some of the ML/KNIL and KNILM pilots in Australia with the second in command (in charge of flying operations) of the DAT, Maj C.L. Cherymison. The latter had flown as a civilian contract pilot on ML/KNIL Lockheed L18 Lodestars and Lockheed L212/L12As until early March 1942. [5]

The DAT had been trying to optimize the scarce available air transport facilities in Australia and had started discussions with Australian National Airways, Guinea Airways and Qantas Airlines for the operation of American DAT aircraft to be maintained by these companies and to be flown by mixed American/Australian aircrews. It had also opened discussions with the provisional NEI Government-in-exile in Melbourne to try to employ the very experienced NEI pilots and crew members. In November and December 1942 agreements with the three Australian companies as well as with the Dutch were concluded. It was decided in the mean time that part of the remaining KLM and KNILM flying personnel was to go to KLM in the West Indies but the about five crews remaining were experienced and very welcome at the DAT. The final discussions to come to the establishment of the T.A. Brisbane were held in December 1942 and led by Colonel R.T. Elsmore, then staff officer

with the U.S. Fifth Air Force staff. The ML was prepared to assist in the formation by releasing some needed personnel from 18 Squadron N.E.I. In exchange for the services of NEI flying personnel the Fifth Air Force arranged that the NEI could use excess capacity on scheduled flights for the transportation of NEI personnel or freight and request DAT assistance for larger air transport jobs. [6]

Late December 1942 a total of 21 NEI flying personnel were assigned to a "transport unit" that was seconded to the Fifth Air Force and initially (by staff Fifth Air Force) was attached as a separate Flight to 39th Troop Carrier Squadron (TCS) of 317th Troop Carrier Group (TCG) USAAF at Archerfield, Brisbane. This could be effectuated immediately on arrival of this USAAF unit in Brisbane on 15 January 1943 as "London" had finally accepted the militarisation of the personnel. The group of personnel to go to the West Indies (ten pilots, aviation wireless operators and flight engineers) sailed for Curacao on 5 January. [7]

There were originally five ML crews with a few spare pilots. The eight pilots of the unit were:

Kap G. van Messel (Flight Superintendent), Kap I.W. Smirnoff, Elt F. van Breemen, Elt A. Reyers, Elt E.W. Dunlop, Elt E. van Dijk, Elt E.E. Hulsebos and Elt G.J.C. te Roller.

In January 1943 one more pilot, Elt Van Balkom, was transferred from 18 Squadron N.E.I. to the new unit. He had already been serving with the squadron at its war base MacDonal in the NW Area but temporarily in a ground position as a reserve 1st pilot.

A fifth aviation wireless operator was also added to the four already available during January 1943. These five were:

Adj J.W. Hoogland, Adj Sweitser (withdrawn from 18 Squadron N.E.I. in January, formerly KLM seconded KNILM) and Sgts W.J. van Aarem, W.C. Bosson and K.W.F. Groothoff.

There were one 2nd pilot-air gunner, Sgt A.C. Brand, and eight flight engineers (called board mechanics by the USAAF and ML at the time): Sgts Schultz, Van Rassel and Gijzemijter (the three with the highest pilot potential to be further cross-trained as a 2nd pilot on the C-47) and Sgts C. Kop, J.A.J. Meyer, G. Elleman, A.C.J. Reus and J.W. Swart. All flight

engineers, hereafter addressed to as flight mechanics which became the general title with the ML during 1944, were withdrawn from 18 Squadron N.E.I. in January. [8]

Flight engineers with the KNILM/KLM had flown regularly on the second pilot seat which seat they shared in most of the used aircraft types with the 2nd pilot as there was no third cockpit seat. In 1940-1941 due to a shortage of pilots many were further cross-trained by their Captains to the point they could do the navigation, were able to relieve the 1st pilot when on cruise flight and could execute emergency landings when



T.A. Brisbane crew at Archerfield approximately August 1943. From left to right: Kap Smirnoff, SM Gijzemijter, Elt Reyers and Adj Hoogland. Dakota VHCHK of 39th TCS/317th TCG was regularly flown in the period of January-September 1943 (official photograph Netherlands Indies Government Information Service, Melbourne, via G. van Messel).

necessary. Many did also receive a short air gunner course with the ML during the war days, when the DC-3s of the airline were equipped with

two machineguns in the aft fuselage in February 1942. [9] Sgt Brand had never served as a flight engineer as he had been an aviation photographer and air cartography specialist with the KNILM. He was an experienced sports pilot, though, and had been trained by the ML as a (reserve) 2nd pilot-air gunner on the Glenn Martin 139 bomber in 1941. [10]

Administrative CO of the new NEI air transport unit per 16 January became Maj G.A. de Stoppelaar (a former KLM representative with the KNILM in Batavia) with as his deputy Kap H.A. Berts (former KNILM manager Australia). De Stoppelaar also became liaison officer with the Fifth Air Force staff as well as the KNIL (Royal NEI Army) liaison officer in Brisbane. In the latter position he was, among others, responsible for reporting the movements of ML ferry crews who were flying new aircraft across the Pacific and for arranging necessary transportation for them. The Administrative CO reported to the Commandant Luchtstrijdkrachten (C-LSK, CO Airforces) of the Headquarters KNIL in Melbourne. An NCO was posted for the general administrative support. De Stoppelaar and Berts also led a small Auto Dienst (Automobile Service) originally consisting of two NCOs and four enlisted men for local transportation of the ML and other KNIL personnel. This was not attached to the Fifth Air Force. Total strength including the Auto Dienst was 32, not counting a few Australian civilians who were hired to support the administrative staff and the operational Flight. [11]

The T.A. Brisbane on operations

The pilots and crew members flew USAAF C-47 aircraft of 39th TCS, 317th TCG and from 29 September 1943 of 21st TCS, 374th TCG and operated as much as possible in four men NEI crews. Kap Van Messel was appointed "Flight Superintendent" and became responsible for operations as the (operational) Flight CO. His tasks also included such administrative responsibilities as crew composition, the daily reporting to Operations of 39th Squadron of the number of crews available etc. The squadron was responsible for the general support of the NEI personnel (rations, quarters etc.), scheduled the NEI crews together with the USAAF crews available and assigned a number of aircraft. The latter were DAT assigned aircraft carrying VH registrations (DAT radio call signs, not Australian civilian registrations) on the vertical tail plane and

otherwise the standard USAAF paint scheme. See Appendix 1 for details of individual aircraft used. The 317th TCG had come under DAT control in January 1943, and with it the “Dutch Flight”, starting with operations to Australian New Guinea (Papua) at the same time. The DAT controlled routing and loading of all DAT assigned units of the USAAF and the RAAF. All NEI crews were flying C-47s within days after the activation of the T.A. Brisbane in mid-January, the first flights being supply flights to Port Moresby. [12]

The differences between the NEI crews and the USAAF crews soon became apparent. The 317th TCG crews had just ferried C-47s across the Pacific but crossing the Torres Strait (700 miles of open sea) between Australia and New Guinea was far more dangerous. The Americans had no experience with flying in the tropics and through inter-tropical fronts of which one had to be passed on the route to Port Moresby. They also had to make do with very few radio aids. NEI personnel were soon involved in giving briefings to USAAF colleagues to share their knowledge. The regular route initially flown was Brisbane-Townsville-Port Moresby flying in supplies or troops and often bringing back to Australia wounded Australian or American soldiers. Later also captured Japanese with their guards were flown to Australia. However, late January Japanese troops were on the verge of attacking Wau, a small town just north of the Owen Stanley Range, the mountain range with its huge tops that runs across New Guinea. Wau had to be strengthened immediately.

C-47s of 317th TCG were gathered at Port Moresby to strengthen the 374th TCG based there. From 28 January up to and including 1 February the crews were flying in supplies and troops from Jackson’s Drome, Port Moresby to the small and dangerously sloping pre-war airfield Wau. Landing at this mountain field had to be done precisely at a marked spot as a go-around was not possible. Four T.A. Brisbane crews participated in these flights. On the first day none of the NEI crews could reach Wau due to adverse weather but on the following four days all made sorties to Wau, some landing when fire was exchanged very close to the airfield. [13]

In February 1943 the NEI crews were tasked with the daily transport from Archerfield to Port Moresby of the night courier of General MacArthur,

the C-in-C SWPA. Colonel Elsmore, DAT Director since 26 January, asked Kap Van Messel if his crews would fly the night courier as this required experienced crews. The route, prevailing weather conditions and the necessary flight schedule formed a somewhat dangerous combination. He stressed that he asked for volunteers but the complete T.A. strength agreed to the job which indeed knew a very demanding flight schedule. Take-off from Archerfield with the courier carrying the operational orders for the field commanders was at c. 20:30 hrs, take-off from Townsville c. 01:00 hrs, arrival at Port Moresby between 05:00 and 06:00 hrs. Take-off at Port Moresby 07:00 hrs and via Townsville back to Archerfield where to land with the courier carrying reports from the field commanders c. 17:00 hrs. The courier flights became an exclusive mission for the T.A. for the next one and a half years, the unit performing spotless without a single incident. [14]

The 380th Bombardment Group (380th BG) USAAF equipped with Consolidated B-24s was based in Australia during May 1943. Dutch Flight carried out supply flights from May already and later also ferried personnel to and from the 380th BG bases in North Australia, Manbulloo Field (until approximately 1 November 1943), Long Strip and Fenton (until, respectively, July and August 1944) for crew changes, flying via Charleville and Cloncurry. The ML occasionally used excess capacity on the C-47s to get the ML technical liaison officer posted in Brisbane or other NEI authorities from Brisbane to 18 Squadrons base Batchelor, which was very close to Fenton. Elt Ekels, then still serving with 18 Squadron N.E.I., flew as a navigation instructor on B-24s of the 319th BS at Fenton (belonging to the 90th BG but seconded to the 380th BG in May) and as lead navigator on a mission to targets at Soerabaja in Java and on a mission to Fak Fak in Dutch New Guinea. Ekels flew these missions in the period of early March to early May 1943. [15]

With allied advances on the ground in Australian New Guinea also Lae, Salamaua (both from September 1943) and Finschhafen (from October 1943) on the northern coast became regular destinations. When these places were just conquered it was often considered impractical or taking too much time to unload at Port Moresby and reload cargo on other C-47s based there. T.A. Brisbane crews also flew along in the airborne assault on Nadzab on 5 September 1943 which was part of the operation

to recapture Lae (Markham Valley operations). The NEI crews were among several 39th TCS crews selected to augment two other 317th TCG squadrons assigned for the parachutist drops. At least three NEI crews participated each leading a Vic of three C-47s.

Lae was captured on 16 September. The T.A. was soon flying in supplies to Port Moresby meant for Lae returning with wounded soldiers or Japanese PoWs, initially flying up to Lae itself. Also Falls River, the airfield of Milne Bay in the eastern part of the island was regularly flown to via Rockhampton and Garbutt with freight, mail and passengers. Most flights made by the NEI crews went to Port Moresby, though. [16]



DAT C-47A VHCGL 42-23953 of 21st TCS/374th TCG. T.A. Brisbane crews regularly flew "Hairless Joe" in the period of c. April 1944-June 1944 (incl.). (Collection Gordon Birkett).

Crew changes and a new CO

During the second half of September 1943 the first off-combat NEI B-25 pilots and crew members became available and the establishment of the T.A. Brisbane was enlarged to eight full crews. Five of the KLM pilots, Kap I.W. Smirnoff, Elt E. van Dijk, Elt E.E. Hulsebos, Elt J.J. van Balkom and Elt G.J.C. te Roller, were the first to be transferred late September and apart from Smirnoff and Van Balkom all went to the KLM in the West

Indies or the United Kingdom. Smirnoff was initially sent to the United States by KLM for a fact finding tour among the American aircraft industry but later served in the United Kingdom. KLM transferred Van Balkom to the U.S.A. as well to study Pacific Ocean flights. He was posted with KLM in the West Indies in March 1944. [17] Sgt 2nd pilot-air gunner Brand also left the unit but went to the Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS). He happened to be an aviation photographer and air cartography specialist and was badly needed for the build-up of a maps and air photographs archive of the NEI for the support of the allied operations planners. [18] Initially there were only four replacements 1st pilots Elt Rab, Elt Ekels and Elt Deenik and 2nd pilot Adj L.C. Reijns, all ex 18 Squadron N.E.I. Also posted in from 18 Squadron N.E.I. but during the first half of October were 1st pilots Kap H. van den Broek, Elt L.J. Janssen, Elt B. Hulscher and SM W. Eikelboom and 2nd pilots Elts J.A. Hartevelt, F. Pelder, R.L.M. Swane and Chr. Busser and SM G.D. Brinkman. [19]

Kap Van Messel took every opportunity to fly himself. He did the check out flights with the new pilots but also helped out the Americans with test flights and took his turns with the courier flights. In November 1943 another of the original former civilian pilots, Kap F. van Breemen, left to become liaison officer of the ML/KNIL with Hq North Western Area of the RAAF in Darwin. He was replaced by (1st pilot) Kap T.G.J. van der Schroeff from the N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool (also called N.E.I. Pool Squadron) in Canberra, a former B-25 pilot of 18 Squadron N.E.I. as well. [20]

On 1 November four relieved aviation wireless operators from 18 Squadron N.E.I. were posted at the T.A. initially on secondment from 119 Squadron N.E.I. in Canberra and from 3 November 1943 on secondment from the N.E.I. Pool Squadron, to be formally posted only on 1 March 1944. They were Sgt A. Maas, Sgt D. Stellema, Sgt V.N. Jansen and Sgt R. Timmermans whose arrival brought the total strength to nine aviation wireless operators. [21] Apart from the formal eight four men flying crews the T.A. actually had a few reserves from 1 November. The three 2nd pilot/flight mechanics, all thoroughly trained as 2nd pilots by Van Messel and the Captains on the C-47, were transferred on 20 January 1944, though. [22] They were posted at the new Transport Section Melbourne

(see below). The transfer made it necessary to assign USAAF mechanics to the crews on occasion as only five flight mechanics remained and no replacements were available. The Americans usually were Corporals or Privates who could service the aircraft and were trained loadmasters. They were unable to perform any repairs, though. The T.A. Brisbane still had a very experienced flying echelon. The ML men posted in the period late September to 1 November had lots of experience with flying in the tropics. Apart from former fighter pilots Pelder and Busser and reconnaissance pilot Brinkman all had flown on Glenn Martin 139 bombers and/or Lockheed L18 Lodestars before the fall of Java. [23]

The transport missions flown were more routine by now than those during the first period of operations. Most flights were still of long duration with potentially dangerous crossings of the tropical front above the Torres Sea and sometimes also the Owen Stanley mountain range, or were flights over endless stretches of barren land in North Australia. The majority of flights were still to Port Moresby (including the courier flights described above) although also many flights were made to Long and Fenton for the support of 380th BG and via Port Moresby to war bases along the northern coast of Australian New Guinea and Milne Bay in the eastern part of the island. Until early August 1944 also a number of flights with couriers, mail and passengers to the Solomon Islands were made. [24]

Maj R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. the just relieved Operations Officer of 18 Squadron N.E.I. and formerly Head of Flying Operations with the KNILM was appointed as the successor of Maj De Stoppelaar on 1 April 1944. He arrived on the next day. [25] With him part of the personnel of his 18 Squadron N.E.I. (RNMFS trained) crew shift was transferred to the T.A. Brisbane during the period from early April up to and including the first week of May. The establishment of the T.A. was temporarily enlarged in April to include 12 four men crews although an increased number of vacant flight mechanic slots had to be filled by USAAF (assistant) crew chiefs. [26] Aviation wireless operator Sweitser, now a Vdg (reserve officer candidate) became assistant of the Flight Superintendent and although officially no longer a crew member he flew as much as he could squeeze himself into the schedules. [27]

Added to the strength in April and early May 1944 were the following personnel of 18 Squadron N.E.I.:



DAT C-47A VHCGQ 42-23582 of 21st TCS/374th TCG was regularly flown by T.A. Brisbane crews in the period of c. April 1944-July 1944 (collection Gordon Birkett).

1st Pilots: Elt J.A. Deknatel, Elt J.L.M. Theunissen.

2nd Pilots: Elt E.J.C. Kiewiet de Jonge, Tlt P. de Vos, SM B.H. Klaassens, SM F.H. Florentinus, SM W.L. de Bruyn, SM S.D.A. van Campen.

Aviation wireless operators: Ovl III (RNN) J. Suzenaar, Adj J. de Jong, Sgt Raden Ismaël, Sgt H.J.H.M. Corbiere. [28]

Also three above strength 2nd pilots who had recently arrived in Australia from the RNMFS in the U.S.A. were posted in April: Tlt J.H. Kok, Ovl III (RNN) M.S. Kamminga, M.Sc. and Sgt S.A.C. Rijnenberg. [29] All flew regularly as a 2nd pilot after an initial check out by Van Messel. Due to this inflow of additional personnel and a temporarily enlarged number of crews the personnel strength by mid-May 1944 had grown to a total of approximately 47 men (excluding the so-called Plaatselijke Dienst, see below).

Maj Wittert van Hoogland, contrary to his predecessor a pilot, started flying part-time C-47 on 6 April. However, already in May he was scheduled for the ferry of a new B-25 from the U.S.A. to Australia and left per USAAF Consolidated C-87 transport on 2 June 1944. Kap Van Messel became acting CO for the duration of Wittert van Hooglands absence. [30] During May-June two of the 2nd pilot/flight mechanics, SM Gijzemijter and SM Schultz, as well as former KNILM (student) flight mechanics SM Bruins and Sgt Van de Graaf, returned, respectively were posted at the T.A. from the Transport Section Melbourne. Kap Van den Broek (1st pilot) was transferred to a ground position as head of the newly formed Plaatselijke Dienst (Local Department) of the KNIL. This Dienst encompassed the non-Fifth Air Force assigned services such as the Auto Dienst and the office of the Billeting & Movement officer originally forming part of the T.A. organization. When the Local Department had to be greatly enlarged in August 1944 due the transfer of large numbers of NEI personnel from Melbourne to Brisbane the CO of the T.A. also became CO of the Local Department, Van den Broek becoming deputy CO. [31]

Former KLM aviation wireless operator Kpl (RNN) J.H. Pool arrived on approximately 1 June to replace Sgt Jansen. Jansen was transferred to a radio station of the RNN near Melbourne on 1 June. Ovl III (RNN) Kamminga, M.Sc. was transferred in June too. [32] He was needed at an NEI oil rehabilitation unit. Total strength (excluding the Plaatselijke Dienst) on 1 July 1944 became 49 men, not counting a few Australian civilians. [33] KNILM Director W.C.J. Versteegh based in New York with the KNILM board of directors had been pulling political strings. He had put pressure on the ML to post as many former KNILM flying personnel as possible with the T.A. Brisbane. Versteegh had the mistaken idea, though, that this unit was strictly non-operational operating far from the front. [34]

Reorganized as 2 N.E.I.T.S.

Wittert van Hoogland, unfortunately, had been hospitalised in the U.S.A. in June and could only leave with a new B-25 on 17 November 1944 to arrive at Amberley, Brisbane ten days later. [35] On 21 August 1944 Maj J. Verwijs, M.Sc. a former pilot and previously CO of the Detachment Melbourne of the KNIL (see below) took over the CO position from

Wittert van Hoogland. The latter was planned to resume command again on his return. Verwijs also became CO of the (KNIL) Detachment Brisbane, the former Plaatselijke Dienst Brisbane. [36]

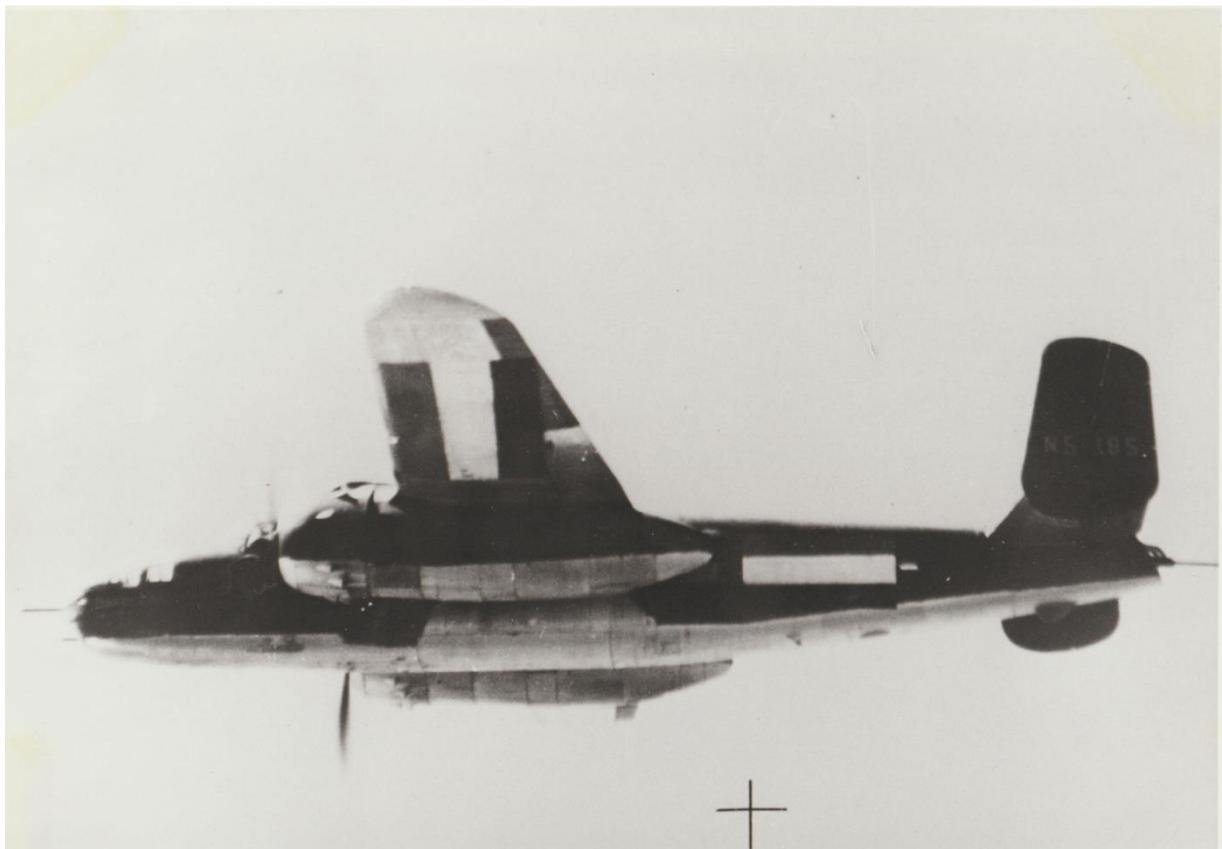
From 26 August 1944 the T.A. Brisbane was officially out of the Fifth Air Force organization. The USAAF Troop Carrier Squadrons in Australia, including 21st TCS, were transferred to New Guinea. During the second half of August very little flying was done as 21st TCS was busy with the move to its new base Nadzab and a large percentage of its personnel was already there or on its way. Kap Van Messel and Kap Van der Schroeff flight tested several C-47s after repairs or maintenance. T.A. crews also ferried a few of the aircraft to Nadzab which was some 42 km from Lae and became the new base of 21st TCS from 26 August. The final flights by ML crews on American DAT Dakota's were made on 25 August 1944. The Fifth Air Force and the DAT had been very pleased with the efforts of the NEI crews which had flown close to 10,000 hours without a single accident, Kap Van Messel receiving a letter of commendation from the DAT Director. [37]

The Fifth Air Force staff and the DAT Allied Air Force SWPA had asked if the T.A. could be transferred with the USAAF squadrons to New Guinea but at the NEI War Office it was preferred to take the unit out of the Fifth Air Force organization. A fast growing need for non-military air transport was foreseen as the liberation of parts of Dutch New Guinea and other NEI islands was progressing relatively fast. By order of 16 August of the NEI War Office the T.A., addressed to as Transport Section Brisbane although this was not an official translation of the unit designation but the postal address, became an independent unit and was renamed No 2 N.E.I. Transport Squadron (2 N.E.I.T.S.) as of 1 September 1944. It was to work up again with NEI aircraft to operate as a NEI unit under NEI operational control when ready. The squadron remained a part of the Commando Luchtstrijdkrachten (Airforces Command) of the KNIL. This small staff led by the Commandant Luchtstrijdkrachten (C-LSK, CO Airforces) was based in Brisbane since August 1944 as part of the so-called Brisbane echelon of the KNIL Headquarters.

The personnel of 2 N.E.I.T.S. was initially kept busy with courses at the N.E.I. Personnel and Equipment Pool (N.E.I.-P.E.P., the former NEI Aircraft and Personnel Pool or N.E.I. Pool Squadron, renamed on 1 April

1944) in Canberra, flew on a few borrowed P.E.P. aircraft or were in the U.S.A. for a ferry flight. A part of the personnel had to be made current on the TB-25 Mitchell. On 26 September three crews led by Kap Van Messel left for Laverton, Melbourne to pick up the first new aircraft. [38]

Aviation wireless operator SM Stellema had volunteered in August for a mission with two specially modified B-25s of 18 Squadron N.E.I. (then with an RSU at Pell) led by Kap Van Breemen. On 23 September around 24:00 hrs local time he took off from Potshot with the N5-185 flown by Elt A. Hagers and SM A.J. van der Heiden of the Transport Section Melbourne and with Elt J. van Praag as navigator and Sgt A. Kanters as airgunner (the latter two from the P.E.P.), to drop leaflets above Japanese PoW and internment camps in Java. The dangerous mission was very successful. The N5-185 landed at Potshot after a flight of extreme duration lasting 12 hours and 15 minutes. The crews of the two



Mitchell N5-185 during a speed test shortly before its mission to Java on 24 September 1944. To get the plane as fast as possible it was cleaned, polished and the grey paint from the belly was removed. Also the armament was reduced and the upper turret removed. (A.J. van der Heiden, via author).

aircraft were asked to report to the CG KNIL in Melbourne where they arrived on the 29th. [39]

The organization of the T.A. was enlarged with a Technical Department with one Chief Mechanic position (not counting the Australian civilians for mechanic and assistant mechanic positions who were being hired), a Navigation office with one observer (navigator-bombardier) position, a Transportation office also with one observer position and an Administration with one position initially to be run by Vdg Sweitser in a double position. The staff of the afore mentioned offices each consisted of one or two Australian civilians. [40]

On the 28 September the first eight aircraft were formally issued, five North American TB-25s (Mitchell bombers converted for freight carrying) from the P.E.P. plus three ML Lockheed C-60A Lodestars withdrawn from 37 Squadron RAAF which had used the C-60As on loan. All arrived late September-early October and most were ferried to Archerfield by own crews. The crews in Melbourne took over the Lodestars LT933, LT934 and LT936 on 27 September and left for Archerfield the next day. All three aircraft had just received a 40-hours or 80-hours inspection with 37 Squadron. The LT936, nevertheless, had to be ferried to Australian National Airways (ANA) at Essendon, Melbourne in October, for repairs. It was collected at Essendon again by a 2 N.E.I.T.S. crew (Captain Elt Theunissen) on 21 October. Lockheed L12A L2-103 was added to the strength and taken over on 26 October after maintenance with ANA at Essendon. It remained based at Essendon, Melbourne. One of the two leaflet mission B-25 aircraft, the N5-180 by now further modified as a TB-25 at the P.E.P., was received on 26 October 1944 as well and also based at Essendon. The N5-180 was, in fact, a replacement for the TB-25 N5-143. The latter went to ANA at Essendon early November for inspection and a double engine change. See Appendix 1 for individual aircraft details. [41]

This was interim equipment to be gradually replaced by (still to be ordered) C-47s. A small detachment of ground personnel of the P.E.P. arrived in September to get the new unit going, these RAAF men to be replaced by Australian civilians in due course. The first civilian technicians were employed in September as well. All had become redundant by the run-down of maintenance and repair activities by

civilian companies at Archerfield for the 81 Air Depot Group of the USAAF. The latter was transferred to New Guinea. Also some ground equipment arrived from the P.E.P. The N5-180 and L2-103 were both based in Melbourne with crews for flights between Melbourne and Brisbane, Perth and other cities on behalf of the acting CG KNIL and the Lieutenant Governor-General of the NEI, respectively. [42]

In the course of October and early November 1944 a rather large part of the flying echelon was transferred. The unit again lost a number of its former civilian flying personnel when in October Kap Rab, Elt Deenik, Vdg Hoogland and SM Van Aarem left for the U.K. to join the KLM. Pilots SM Brinkman and SM Florentinus went to the P.E.P. for retraining as a fighter pilot on the Curtiss P-40 which started approximately on 1 October with a type transition at the P.E.P. Apart from Florentinus the personnel from the Wittert van Hoogland crew shift of 18 Squadron NEI remained. Pilots Tlt Kok and SM Rijnenberg, however, went to the P.E.P. for a refresher or operational training on the B-25 in October, as did Adj Reijns. Of the personnel posted before 1 April 1944 Kap van der Schroeff and Elt Swane were scheduled for a B-25 ferry flight and also left in October. Pilot Elt W. Buwalda and aviation wireless operator Sgt J.P. Loembang Tobing (relieved from 18 Squadron NEI on 1 October) were posted from the P.E.P. to 2 N.E.I.T.S. in October but were busy ferrying a B-25 and did not report in until the first week of November. [43]

The personnel strength of the unit at the end of October 1944 (flying echelon only) was nine 1st pilots (Van Messel included, of which two away for a ferry flight), six 2nd pilots (of which one on a ferry flight), seven wireless operators (Sweitser included, one away on a ferry flight) and seven flight mechanics (excluding SM Gijzemijter who had become Chief Mechanic and SM Schultz who flew full time as a 2nd pilot). [44] Three new aviation wireless operators, Sgt (RNN) J. Erkelens, Sgt H. van Beuge and Sgt L.F. van den Berg were further posted on 1 November 1944 as were one new 1st pilot, Elt H.F. Schenk and three new 2nd pilots, Elts W.A. Muurling, J. Tuyt and Van Rassel. Transferred to the P.E.P. per 1 November for a B-25 refresher were aviation wireless operators Adj De Jong and SMs Maas, Stellema and Timmermans. All four left late October already, Ovl III (RNN) Suzenaar following early November. [45] Also Kpl (RNN) Pool left at the end of October but probably returned to

the RNN. [46] The strength was back at eight flying crews with a few reserves. Van Rassel, now an Elt, returned to his old unit after completing a B-25 conversion course with the P.E.P., becoming a 2nd pilot on the TB-25 Mitchell. [47]



NEI transport aircraft of 1 N.E.I.T.S. and 2 N.E.I.T.S. at Sansapur in October 1944. Up front a C-47 of the former squadron and in the back next to a USAAF B-25 a TB-25 of the latter unit (official photograph Netherlands Indies Government Information Service, via Gerard Casius).

The squadron, apart from the two crews at Essendon, made unscheduled flights with three to four crews available daily from Archerfield. Destinations were airfields in Dutch New Guinea and Australia. Flights were made for the NEI Government echelon in Brisbane and in support of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration

(NICA) and Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS), the staffs of which were also based in Brisbane, as well as the KNIL. The latter in support of the KNIL battalion headquarters and subordinate units in Casino (NSW), as well as the KNIL companies and detachments of guides/interpreters operating with the allied ground forces in New Guinea. The flights to destinations in Dutch New Guinea appears to have become the main task of the unit. In October the squadron, with TB-25s and C-60s, flew relief goods to Sansapur airfield at Mar in the Vogelkop. The DAT had been dissolved on 3 October 1944, the squadron movement officer as a result occasionally receiving a transport order from the C-LSK which was actually a request from the RAAF for assistance. No 2 N.E.I.T.S. became officially operational on 4 October which in view of the date DAT was dissolved may not have been a coincidence. [48]

The remaining seven former civilian (student) flight engineers now alternated maintenance duty in the hangar with the flying of transport missions. Not in this total are Gijzemijter and Schultz who both had successfully completed L12A advanced flying training at the T.S.M., as Van Rassel had (see later), but still had to complete their pilot training by following a B-25 training. Only Schultz did and went to the P.E.P. for his B-25 course in December. Both he and Van Rassel received their ML pilot and observer wings on 1 March 1945, Schultz also becoming a Vdg (reserve officer candidate). SM Gijzemijter had become the Chief Mechanic of the squadron as already mentioned. Leading the technical personnel seconded from the P.E.P., the ML flight mechanics when on hangar duty and the Australian civilian technical personnel, he was withdrawn from further pilot training in October at his own request. [49]

Manned up but dissolved

On 7 November 1944 2 N.E.I.T.S. was rather suddenly merged with 1 N.E.I.T.S. and subsequently administratively dissolved on 15 November 1944. The decision had been taken by LKol B.J. Fiedeldij who was head of the so-called Afdeeling C (C Department) of the NEI War Office (part of the so-called Melbourne echelon of the NEI Headquarters) and was responsible for organizational matters and the non-operational coordination with the RAAF. A transfer to Biak, an island belonging to Dutch New Guinea, had proven to be impossible due to a lack of ML

ground personnel while the RAAF was unwilling to make available additional RAAF ground personnel for the unit. Transfer of Australian civilian personnel to a war zone was also ruled out. Kap A.B. Wolff, the ML liaison officer with Hq AAF SWPA had further brought to Fiedeldij's attention that the establishment of two but both non-AAF SWPA assigned ML air transport squadrons on 1 September 1944 had raised eyebrows. It would not help NEI efforts to procure more C-47s and a higher priority in procuring spare parts. [50]

Maj Verwijs, in effect, had become the last CO of 2 N.E.I.T.S. With 2 N.E.I.T.S. dissolved on 15 November Maj Wittert van Hoogland was posted at the P.E.P. on his return from the U.S.A. [50] All personnel of 2 N.E.I.T.S. including the Australian civilians were administratively transferred to 1 N.E.I.T.S. (based at Archerfield since 1 October 1944, see below) on 15 November 1944. The NEI strength on 7 November 1944 had been 39, the total personnel strength approximately 100. [51]

The N.E.I. Transport Section Melbourne and 1 N.E.I.T.S.

Organizing the T.S.M.

The origins of the Transport Section Melbourne (T.S.M.) are to be found in the Transport Section of the N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool, N.E.I. Pool Squadron for short, at Fairbairn airfield, Canberra. The Pool Squadron was established on 1 September 1943 but existed on paper only during the first month. Its transport section started forming early November 1943 and from early December supported 18 Squadron N.E.I. at Batchelor (NW Area) with eventually four Lockheed C-60A Lodestars and one Douglas C-47A Dakota.

Only two of the six NEI ordered Lodestars (the LT932 and the LT934) were ferried by a NEI ferry crew trained at the RNMFS in the U.S.A. Captains were Kap Wittert van Hoogland, respectively Elt J.C. Meeuwenoord. Aircraft LT932 was attached to 18 Squadron N.E.I. but the LT934 was accepted in Brisbane on 24 December and arrived at Canberra early January 1944. Lodestars LT931, LT933, LT935 and LT936 were ferried by Air Transport Command of the USAAF and received and accepted by the ML in Australia in September, November and December 1943 and in January 1944, respectively. The LT933 and LT936 went to the transport section after a post-ferry inspection and the

removal of ferry tanks. Aircraft LT931 was first attached to 18 Squadron N.E.I. on 1 October, reassigned 119 Squadron N.E.I. at Canberra (received on 9 October, carrying relieved pilots and crewmembers) and transferred to the transport section when this unit disbanded on 10 December 1943. As the transport section was not operational yet, 119 Squadron N.E.I. made three supply flights from Canberra to Batchelor in November 1943 with the aircraft. Aircraft LT935 was transferred to the RAAF on loan (see below). [52]

Kap A.J. de Vries who had just been relieved as Operations Officer of 18 Squadron N.E.I. arrived in Canberra on 9 October. Early November he became the temporary CO of the transport section awaiting the arrival of Kap S. de Mul from the U.S.A. De Vries started organizing the section and learned to fly the Lodestar at 119 Squadron N.E.I. during November. Chief mechanic Adj C. Plesman, ex RNMFS and formerly KLM-West Indies and Netherlands Purchasing Commission in the U.S.A., as well as former KNILM student flight engineers Sgt Bruins and Sgt Van de Graaf were posted at the NEI Pool Squadron on 1 October. Bruins and Van de Graaf were transferred from 18 Squadron N.E.I. and became flight mechanic on the Lodestar. Plesman was to become the Chief Mechanic of the section and became a Onderluitenant (Sub Lieutenant) when the T.S.M. was formally established. The new transport section began operations with just three crews and one Lodestar in the final week of November after Lodestar LT933 had arrived. With this aircraft the first supply flight of the section for the support of 18 Squadron N.E.I. was made, the LT933 arriving at Batchelor on 4 December. It was the start of a weekly scheduled flight with one aircraft to Batchelor. Only in January 1944 additional former 18 Squadron N.E.I. personnel could be posted and was a sufficient number of aircraft available. [53]

Lodestar LT932 arrived and was accepted by the ML at RAAF Station Laverton, Melbourne on 23 August 1943. After the post-ferry inspection (80-hours inspection) and the removal of the ferry tanks with ANA at the civilian airfield Essendon, Melbourne it was issued to 18 Squadron N.E.I. as there was no transport section as yet. LT932 arrived at Batchelor on 2 September but was reassigned to the Pool Squadron on approximately 7 January. It was destined for delivery on loan to the RAAF and on 11 January the aircraft was ferried to 1 Aircraft Depot (1 AD) RAAF at

Laverton with destination 37 Squadron RAAF. The former in accordance with an agreement with the RAAF (see below). The aircraft was in need of maintenance, however.



Arrival of Lodestar LT932 (then still without its ML serial which was introduced in October 1943) at Batchelor on 2 September 1943. The ML C-60As were painted in the 1940-41 ML camouflage of two colours of green and light grey. (René Wittert van Hoogland, via author).

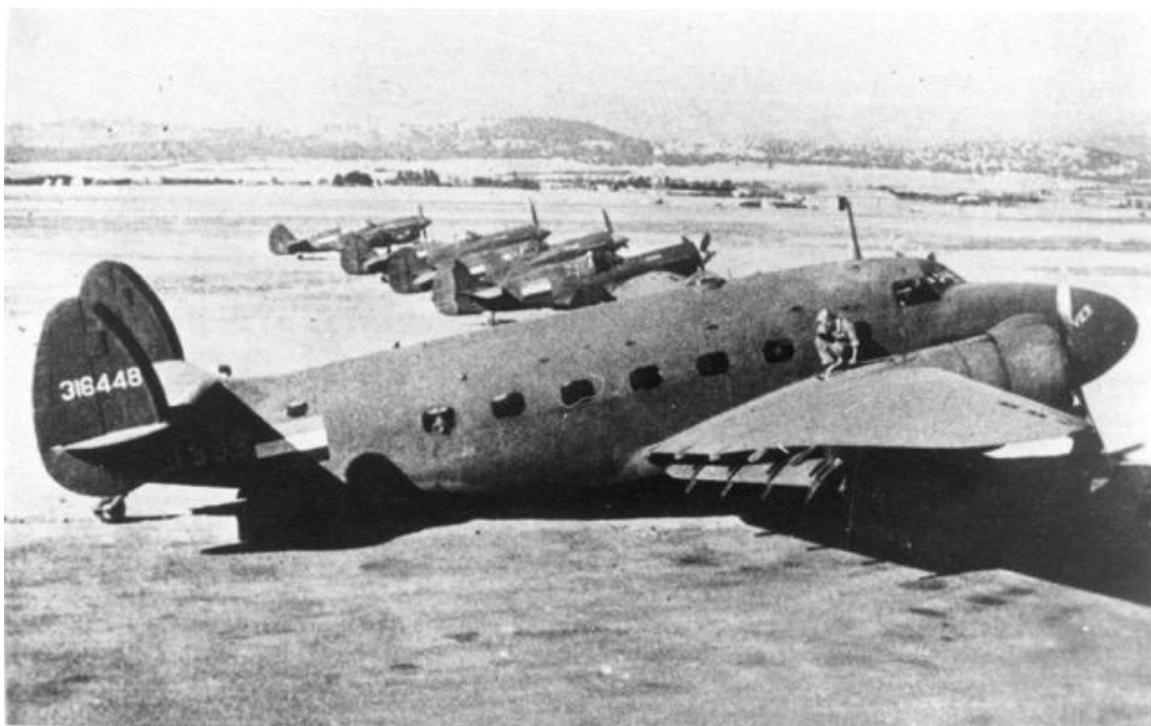
The NEI War Office in Melbourne was still discussing arrangements for the maintenance of the ML transport aircraft in January 1944. Apart from engine overhaul the RAAF had no capacity to offer and insisted that the Dutch should conclude an arrangement with the Australian Department of Aircraft Production which directed and oversaw aircraft maintenance done by civilian companies. The NEI War Office indeed concluded a contract with Australian National Airways (ANA) and the Department in January, the Lodestars to get their inspections and overhauls with ANA at Essendon (80-hours inspection) and Parafield, Adelaide (240-hours overhaul and 480-hours overhaul, including engine changes, see later). The NEI already had a contract with ANA for post-ferry inspections and the removal of ferry tanks to be done by ANA at Essendon. The RAAF (1 AD) was to take care of the ferry of the LT932 to Parafield and would take the aircraft on loan after its overhaul. LT932 never flew with the transport section of the Pool Squadron therefore. Also Lodestar LT935 was never allocated to the section. It went to 1 AD at Laverton on 5 January 1944 after removal of the ferry tanks and the post-ferry inspection with ANA at Essendon. No 37 Squadron RAAF at Laverton received the airplane two days later. See the remarks with Appendix 2 for details.

The first Douglas C-47A Dakota (DT937) for the section was initially delivered to the RNMFS on 11 December but, needed in Australia, was delivered to Long Beach and handed over to Air Transport Command of the USAAF circa 17 December and arrived at Amberley, Brisbane on 22 December 1943. As there was no C-47 qualified crew available with the Pool Squadron personnel of the T.A. Brisbane accepted the aircraft and spent a few days training some of the personnel of the transport section including Kap De Vries and Adj Plesman. The DT937 was then flown to Melbourne for the post ferry work (100-hours inspection and removal of ferry tanks) by ANA at Essendon airfield. It was returned to the transport section at Canberra on approximately 19 January. Three T.A. Brisbane flight mechanics with Dakota experience arrived around the same date. DT937 left for its first support flight to Batchelor on 28 January 1944. [54]

The three flight mechanics (former KNILM flight engineers) were transferred to the section on 20 January 1944. They were Sgts Schultz, Gijzemijter and Van Rassel, all three 2nd pilot/flight mechanic. In practise the total of five flight mechanics was to supervise and train the about 50 mostly inexperienced RAAF ground personnel available mid-January (see below). They also flew as a crewmember in the eight crews which were formed by now. [55]

After some additional unscheduled flights early January with Lodestars to complete a crew shift change at 18 Squadron N.E.I. (combined with the flying in of supplies) the weekly flight from Canberra to Batchelor via Archerfield, Brisbane was continued. The final flights from Canberra to Batchelor arrived on 22 January (Lodestar LT936) and on 29 January (Dakota DT937) the aircraft leaving again the next day. [56] During January the section was further engaged in the training of newly posted pilots and crew members on the Lodestar and the Dakota. Kap De Vries did most of the conversion training which was combined with flights to various RAAF airbases for familiarisation. [57]

The transport section was transferred to Melbourne on 1 February 1944 following an advise of the CO RAAF Station Canberra. Serious accommodation shortages had developed in Canberra which



Lodestar LT933 of the Transport Section of the N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool with P-40Ns of 120 Squadron N.E.I. at Canberra in January 1944 (collection Thijs Postma).

airbase saw a huge inflow of NEI personnel and aircraft. [58] The section was taken out of the N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool organization and administratively became a part of the so-called Detachment Melbourne (Detachment Melbourne) of the KNIL Headquarters. The N.E.I.-T.S.M. was formally established on 1 February 1944 at RAAF Station Laverton. [59] Also at Essendon the aircraft of the unit could be seen frequently for training, loading and unloading of passengers and luggage (due to the austerity of facilities at Laverton) and the C-47s and C-60s also for visits to the workshops of ANA for inspections and repairs.

From 1 February to 1 April SM C. Bijlsma of the Pool Squadron (also ex 18 Squadron N.E.I.) was temporarily posted with the Detachment Melbourne and attached to the T.S.M. He became the deputy of the Chief Mechanic of the section and responsible (with one of the senior pilots) for the acceptance of three new C-47s to be delivered during February-March. He flew as a flight mechanic as well. The second C-47 (DT938) was accepted by the ML in Melbourne on 5 February after the ferry flight by a NEI crew from the RNMFS with Captain Kap D.L. Asjes, M.Sc. As usual the aircraft first went to ANA at Essendon for an inspection and removal of ferry tanks and it was not issued to the T.S.M.

until approximately 10 February 1944. Dakota DT939 was accepted by the ML on 16 March and again arrived with a NEI crew from the RNMFS. Captain was Kap De Mul who was posted with the T.S.M. as the new CO shortly after arrival. His 2nd Pilot was Kol C. Giebel, the former RNMFS CO. Dakota DT940 arrived in Melbourne on 24 March also with a RNMFS trained crew with Captain Kap A.B. Wolff. [60]



Dakota DT939 was delivered at the RNMFS in the U.S.A. and departed Jackson (Miss.) for Australia on 15 February 1944. Base commander Colonel Th. Foster shakes hands with navigator LTZ I (RNN) J. de Bruyn shortly before departure (collection author).

The pilots initially posted with N.E.I.-T.S.M. from 18 Squadron N.E.I., 119 Squadron N.E.I. and the N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool were the following.

1st Pilots: Kap De Vries (CO), Elt Meeuwenoord, Tlt J.A. Kuneman, Tlt A. Hagers, Tlt W.F.A. Winckel, Tlt F. Olsen, Olt J.E. de Jongh and Sgt A.J. van der Heiden. 2nd Pilots: Elt H.A.H.M. Tander, Tlt W.J. Heikoop and Tlt H.J.H. Daanen. [61]

Approximately five fighter pilots, including Elt P. Verspoor, flew as 2nd pilot from early February. They were just out of training at the RNMFS in the U.S.A. but all fighter pilots had flown 20-30 twin-engine hours. [62]

Former 18 Squadron N.E.I. aviation wireless operators initially posted were: SMs W.B. Maks, J.H. de Kat, F.C. Weber, J. Kieft, H.F. van der Heijden, J.H. Rouvroye, P.F. Breekveldt and A. Rozema. [63]

The formation of the T.S.M. took some time as some of the ML personnel and equipment were still en route to Australia from the U.S.A. at the time of establishment. Kap De Vries remained in charge until Kap De Mul took over as CO on approximately 18 March 1944. [64] Apart from CO of the T.S.M. De Mul also became Plaatselijk Commandant (Local CO) Melbourne of the KNIL, i.e. CO of the KNIL Detachement Melbourne consisting, apart from the T.S.M., of the so-called Plaatselijke Dienst (Local Department, offices for services to the KNIL personnel posted in and near Melbourne: Administration, Postal services, an Automobile transportation service and the office of the Movement Officer), the KNIL local Medical service and the office of the KNIL Quartermaster. [65]

In agreement with the RAAF

Already in August 1943 it had been agreed with RAAF Command that six NEI Lodestars would be operated on loan by 37 Squadron RAAF with Dutch pilots and RAAF crew members and NEI cargo and passengers having priority. The aircraft would keep their Dutch insignia. This was one of several agreements concerning the organization and provisions for NEI squadrons in Australia recorded in a report made up by the KNIL Headquarters on 15 September 1943. The agreement was adapted in December 1943. Lodestars not needed by the NEI itself would be loaned

to the RAAF but without Dutch pilots and any priority for Dutch cargo and passengers. It had also been agreed in August 1943 with RAAF Command and GHQ SWPA that as part of the NEI Aircraft and Personnel Pool to be established at Canberra a Dakota Flight of eight aircraft would be formed for the support of the operational NEI squadrons. The latter were 18 Squadron N.E.I. and 119 Squadron N.E.I. (established on 1 September 1943 and to be equipped with B-25 medium-bombers) plus the not yet formed fighter squadron 120 Squadron N.E.I. To this task was later added support of a KNIL Infantry Company in Dutch New Guinea. [66] The Flight was to be initially equipped with the NEI Lodestars until the Dakotas would be delivered. No 119 Squadron N.E.I. at Canberra was disbanded on 10 December 1943 due to personnel shortages. The RNMFS trained a complete crew shift plus a reserve of 150% for this unit so flying personnel for the Dakota Flight would be available in abundance.

The RNMFS had delivered only very small numbers of ground technicians while also the RAAF was unable to supply ground echelons for 119 Squadron N.E.I. as well as 120 Squadron N.E.I. and the N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool. The operational losses in 18 Squadron N.E.I. were also higher than expected giving a shortfall in the number of RNMFS trained reserve crews available for the squadron. [67] As a consequence the transport section took over part of the ML personnel already posted with and eventually all aircraft already delivered to 119 Squadron N.E.I.. The latter were the already mentioned Lodestar LT931 received on 10 December and TB-25Cs (disarmed Mitchell bombers converted for freight transport) N5-134 and N5-142 which were received from the Pool Squadron in February 1944. [68]

The T.S.M. would eventually be equipped with the eight NEI ordered C-47As and some of the Lockheed L12A communication aircraft formerly used as trainers by the RNMFS. It was to be based in Melbourne as mentioned above. Apart from operational KNIL units it would also support the NEI Government-in-exile and civilian and military NEI headquarters in Melbourne and Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) and Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS) detachments in Dutch New Guinea. NEI passengers and freight were the



Lodestar LT933 of the T.S.M. creating dust in February 1944, probably at Merauke, Dutch New Guinea (collection Thijs Postma).

first priority but all excess capacity was offered to the RAAF on a permanent basis. The six ML Lodestars would go to the RAAF on loan as soon as the C-47s were delivered which amounted to a substantial capacity. It should further be noted that the T.S.M. would also support the RAAF Components in the NEI operational squadrons, so no surprise that the RAAF was definitely pleased with the arrangements made. [69]

Enlarging the personnel strength and the aircraft establishment

The personnel strength of the T.S.M. in February was only approximately 30 flying personnel (all ML) and 50 ground personnel (all RAAF apart from Olt Plesman and radio mechanic Sgt E.I. Rookmaker who had arrived from the RNMFS). The ML flight mechanics although alternating between supervisor in the ground echelon and flight mechanic or 2nd pilot/flight mechanic in the flying crews were considered to be flying personnel. The ML personnel was administratively posted at the KNIL Detachement Melbourne of which the T.S.M. was a part. [70] The RAAF personnel was seconded from RAAF Station Canberra (from where they were attached to the N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool) to RAAF Station Laverton. [71] The ML strength soon expanded when more personnel

from the RNMFS in the U.S.A. and relieved 18 Squadron N.E.I. pilots and crew members started to arrive in March-April 1944.

The pilots in the flying echelon became a mix of relieved 18 Squadron N.E.I. B-25 pilots and fresh hands recently arrived from the RNMFS. The latter a few older very experienced former instructors who would never fly operations, former instructors who had followed the RNMFS B-25 operational training and just out of training Curtiss P-40 and North American B-25 pilots posted as 2nd pilot. Pilots who arrived during March and April from the (dissolved on 15 February 1944) RNMFS included:

Elt J.B. Scheuer (who became T.S.M.'s Head of Flying Operations), Elt P.J. van der Griend, Tlt A.D.M. Moorrees, Olt W.A. Rademaker and Olt P.J.F. Kranenburg, all former instructors. Also some just out of training 2nd pilots were posted, including Ovl III (RNN) R.E. Basenau who had been 2nd pilot on the ferry of the DT940 and Sgt S.R. de Kadt, both B-25 pilots.

In the same period the first groups of relieved 18 Squadron N.E.I. personnel arrived. The latter included at least seven pilots. During May four more relieved B-25 pilots arrived, followed in June-July 1944 by three pilots. Three relieved aviation wireless operators arrived in April 1944, one in May and two more during July 1944. There were also some aviation wireless operators who came straight from the RNMFS. [72]

To accommodate all these pilots and crew members the number of crews was enlarged from eight to twelve in April. This was also done at the T.A. Brisbane, as mentioned above. Instead of 24 pilots there were, however, approximately 48 pilots with the unit. Also additional aviation wireless operators had been posted to a total of approximately 24. This made it possible to give a relatively large number of pilots and crew members a rest posting after their operational tour or a flying posting preceding their first operational tour. A solution necessarily "ML organized" as the RAAF could offer only few postings for ML flying personnel at the time while also the N.E.I. Pool Squadron only had a small cadre of instructors and staff. The double crew strength was rather efficient, though, as usually a part of the personnel was on duty elsewhere (see below). Another advantage was that the number of daily available crews did not drop sharply after the frequently made very long

flights to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea and Batchelor in NW Australia. These necessitated mandatory rest on return to keep the pilots and crew members from exceeding the safety limit of 100 flying hours a month. [73]

The authorised temporary ML personnel strength was 102, 48 pilots (CO and Head of Flying Operations included), five observers, 25 aviation wireless operators, 20 Technical Service personnel (including the Chief Mechanic and his deputy) and four general duty personnel. The observers (navigator-bombardiers) were to fly as navigator in the crews when deemed necessary while one was appointed Navigation officer in the unit staff. This strength was now and then upped slightly by the NEI War Office for a certain period. The strength authorised was a temporary one as the unit had to gradually grow to a formal establishment of 265, all NEI, including flying personnel for 12 crews. [74]

During April the actual strength of the T.S.M. for the flying part had already reached approximately 80 ML men but as mentioned a part of the assigned personnel was not available for duty. Some were in the U.S.A. for the ferry of new B-25s, others followed a course with the RAAF or the Pool Squadron. There were also temporary postings for instance at the NEI War Office or at a NEI Government agency, often lasting several months. All of the NEI departments and their agencies suffered from personnel shortages despite the hiring of Australian civilians for administrative duties and ML personnel was very much in demand. The ferry assignments normally took close to a month including travel time to the U.S.A. and some necessary flying in the U.S.A. A ferry crew sometimes ferried two B-25s per assignment and was away for some two months. [75] With bad luck this could be even more.

A ferry crew that left in March consisting of one pilot (SM Van der Heiden) and an aviation wireless operator (SM Breekveldt) from the T.S.M., a navigator (Tlt L.W. Hansen) from the Pool Squadron and one pilot (SM W. Eikelboom) from the T.A. Brisbane did only return in June. The crew first ferried a B-25 during March and then left the U.S.A. with a second B-25 in May. They stranded in Hawaii after an American mechanic who did engine test runs with a USAAF B-25 forgot the brakes. The ML aircraft ended up heavily damaged with a chewed up rear fuselage. [76] The crew returned to San Francisco to pick up yet another

new B-25 and eventually arrived in Canberra on 19 June 1944. Van der Heiden and Breekveldt returned to the T.S.M. and also navigator-bombardier Hansen ended up there as a navigator. [77]

Part of the mechanics in 18 Squadron N.E.I. at Batchelor were replaced by others from the RNMFS or by men just out of training with RAAF Schools from approximately February 1944. This made possible in the period of April-May 1944 the withdrawal of ten mechanics with experience as flight mechanic on the Glenn Martin 139 bomber or Lockheed L18 Lodestar as well as on the B-25 during the training period of 18 Squadron N.E.I. in Canberra in 1942. The ten arrived at the T.S.M. directly from 18 Squadron N.E.I. or via a short spell with the N.E.I. Personnel and Equipment Pool (N.E.I.-P.E.P., the former N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool renamed on 1 April 1944). They were:

Adj E. van Aken (becoming deputy chief mechanic) and Sgts R.D.W. Samson, E.J. Lantang, J. van Oosten, G. Pilger, G. Brookman, J.E. Leydelmeyer, T. Buehre, H. Bekema and Sgt J.F. Damwijk. [78]

Approximately five mechanic apprentices arrived from around February. Most went to 18 Squadron N.E.I. or the N.E.I. Pool Squadron after some months apart from assistant mechanic Kpl Lionnara. He stayed with the T.S.M. to become a Sgt mechanic a year later. Four of the five former KNILM flight mechanics were transferred to the T.A. Brisbane in May-June 1944, however, leaving only SM Van Rassel. [79]

The initial aircraft complement was a temporary one and only fully available from 14 February. See Appendix 2 for details on individual aircraft used. Aircraft administratively assigned to the T.S.M. in the period of 1-14 February were the following 13 transport and communication aircraft, although it should be noted that the official aircraft complement was eight. The L12As were above strength staff communication and training aircraft. [80]

C-60As: LT931, LT933, LT934 and LT936. C-47As: DT937 and DT938 (the latter from c. 10 February). TB-25Cs: N5-134 and N5-142 (the latter from 14 February). L12As: L2-100, L2-101, L2-102, L2-103 and L2-104 (assigned during the period of 1-14 February 1944 incl.).

The T.S.M. on operations

The T.S.M. was not integrated in the RAAF organization as the NEI operational squadrons were but operated under Dutch control of the NEI Commandant Luchtstrijdkrachten (C-LSK, CO Airforces), LKol E.J.G. te Roller in Melbourne, who co-ordinated operational activities with the RAAF. The T.S.M. also maintained good relations with the Laverton based 37 Squadron RAAF, which had already put to good use the first borrowed NEI Lodestar from 7 January 1944. [81]

The transport section carried out transport orders from the day of its establishment flying missions within Australia, mostly in support of 18 Squadron N.E.I. at Batchelor, as well as flights to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea in support of the NICA and the NEFIS detachments and No 1 N.E.I. Fuselier Company based there, as mentioned already. One regular transport mission was flown weekly for the support of 18 Squadron N.E.I. with one aircraft. The crew first flew to Canberra and via Sydney to Brisbane. On the second day Batchelor was reached via Charleville and Cloncurry. The aircraft usually returned after a night-stop in Batchelor via Cloncurry and Charleville (night-stop), Sydney and Canberra, reaching Melbourne after a four days round-trip. The T.S.M. aircraft transported food and other supplies and ML and RAAF personnel returning from leave and usually returned with personnel of 18 Squadron N.E.I. to go on leave. A second regular weekly route was flown with one aircraft to Merauke via Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane (night-stop), Townsville and Cairns and the same route back to Melbourne after a night-stop in Merauke, also a four days round-trip. Apart from NEI and Australian personnel also small numbers of American service personnel were regularly transported to and from Merauke. The above were most appreciated services as personnel on leave had priority over everything else and the Dakotas and Lodestars almost always arrived spot on schedule, also bringing the latest mail. [82]

During the second half of March Dakotas DT939 and DT940 were accepted, as mentioned. The Lodestars LT933 and LT934 were in need of overhaul, however and were taken off the flying schedule during March. The LT933 needed a 480-hours overhaul and engine change and the LT934 a 240-hours overhaul. Both went to ANA but only after their



ML Lodestar operated on loan by 37 Squadron RAAF photographed at Higgins Field (Horn Island) in September 1944. Also T.S.M./1 N.E.I.T.S. transport aircraft could be seen there on occasion, visiting 1 RSU RAAF. This RSU had four operational ML P-40Ns in flyable storage as a reserve for 120 Sq N.E.I. from c. June 1944. (Collection Thijs Postma).

transfer to 37 Squadron RAAF on 14 April. No 37 Squadron had been ordered to ferry the aircraft to Parafield. Aircraft strength was kept at 13: four C-47As, two C-60As, two TB-25Cs and five L12As. See Appendix 2 for details on individual aircraft. TB-25 N5-142 was the first Mitchell that had to be replaced as it reached 1,000 hours late March and went via the N.E.I. Pool Squadron in Canberra to 3 Air Depot RAAF at Amberley, Brisbane for major overhaul. [83]

The T.S.M. completed its first major transport assignment in March 1944. This concerned the movement of a part of the personnel and equipment of 120 Squadron N.E.I. from Canberra to Potshot in Western Australia. The squadron at that time was preparing a transfer to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea. A Japanese attack was expected and emergency movements at very short notice of allied ground and air forces were ordered. The move of the two NEI squadrons started on 9 March with T.S.M. becoming responsible for a part of the support to 120 Squadron N.E.I. with its C-47s and TB-25s. The route Melbourne-Merauke was flown with Lodestars in this period. [84]

Unfortunately only one of the C-47s was available (the second was in maintenance) which was deployed together with both TB-25s. The three aircraft arrived at Canberra in the afternoon of 8 March together with four civilian (probably ANA) operated DC-3/C-47s plus a (ANA operated) DC-5. One of the civilian Dakota's proved to be unserviceable and was not used. The TB-25s were to transport part of the cargo and act as lead plane for the P-40 fighters. One of the TB-25 with the first seven P-40s that were made (rather limited) operationally serviceable were the first to leave Canberra on 9 March for Geraldton with Potshot, as it turned out, as a final destination. Four of the transport planes left on the same date. They were followed on the next day by a borrowed second TB-25 with two P-40s. The TB-25 of the T.S.M. had to return after take-off with a malfunction the previous day and was replaced by the N5-129 of the N.E.I. Pool Squadron. The fifth transport plane had had a starter motor malfunction and left on the 10th too. The remaining 15 P-40s of 120 Squadron N.E.I. were all ready on 12 March and left the next day guided by the N5-134 and the N5-142 of the T.S.M. and the N5-129 of the N.E.I. Pool Squadron. The T.S.M. C-47 left for Potshot again on the 13th as well. [85]

Also 18 Squadron N.E.I. was ordered from Batchelor to Potshot on 9 March, to return at Batchelor on 23 March but NEI transport aircraft or crews were not involved. [86] No 120 Squadron N.E.I. was to leave Potshot on 23 March as well but due to a shortage of transport aircraft this became 27 March, the unit arriving at Canberra the next day. At the end of March the T.S.M. aircraft were all safely back at Laverton. It had been quite a test, flying over endless desert area's in sometimes very bad weather with a cyclone and sand storms raging. [87]

During April 1944 some of T.S.M.'s transport aircraft were in inspection. Yet another major transport job was successfully carried out, the movement of a part of the personnel and equipment of 120 Squadron N.E.I. from Canberra to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea. Three American DAT Pool Dakota's were borrowed from 36 Squadron RAAF for this job. The mission was carried out on 10 and 11 April with six aircraft in total,



The TB-25 N5-158 VHRDF flew with the T.S.M. from April 1944. It was photographed in December 1944 or January 1945 at Essendon, Melbourne when with ANA for inspection. (Collection Gerben Tornij).

the C-47s DT939, VHCFT, VHCHB and VHCHL and the TB-25s N5-129 (borrowed from the P.E.P.) and N5-158. On 28 April the rear party left Canberra in the L12A L2-101 and a 374 TCG C-47 of the USAAF. [88]

Total personnel strength of N.E.I.-T.S.M. had grown to over 150 during April 1944 of which 100 ML personnel, around 50 RAAF personnel seconded from the P.E.P. and a few locally hired Australian civilians. The T.S.M. also had a limited training task for flying crew. It took in a few licensed pilots who had to follow a refresher course after a non-flying period due to medical reasons, for example. The latter started out on the L12A on which type also three of the former KNILM flight engineers followed some advanced flying training.

Sergeant-majors Gijzemijter, Schultz and Van Rassel had followed some training as a 2nd pilot with the KNILM and the T.A. Brisbane, as mentioned already. With the latter unit they had regularly flown as 2nd pilot on the C-47 and all three were considered proficient in navigation, basic flying and emergency landings and were enthusiastic flyers. That proved to be more than true and all three were fully solo on the L12A in no time and showed they could properly land a C-47. [89] Navigator

Hansen (with already some time as a 2nd pilot on the B-25 at 18 Squadron N.E.I.) flew L12A as well to be posted to 6 SFTS RAAF in September 1944 for formal flight training to get his pilot wings. Such a posting was considered quite unnecessary for the former KNILM men but some form of military training had to be devised to get them their ML wings. The War Office decided on a B-25 2nd pilot course at the P.E.P. with SM Van Rassel becoming the first (trial) candidate. He was posted at the P.E.P. for the course in August 1944. [90]

The focus shifts to Dutch New Guinea

During April two extra TB-25s were issued and two brand-new Dakotas were accepted after the ferry flight on 23 and 25 April. The aircraft strength on 1 May became 15: five C-47As, two C-60As, four TB-25s and four L12As, becoming 16 after ANA delivered the last of the two new Dakotas early May. See Appendix 2 for individual aircraft details. The fifth L12A was permanently seconded to 120 Squadron N.E.I. per 28 April and was regularly exchanged for another T.S.M. L12A when it needed inspection. Authorised aircraft strength was raised from eight to 12 in April as in RAAF transport squadrons, the L12As remaining attached above strength. [91]

Allied troops had made substantial progress in the fight for Dutch New Guinea and successfully attacked Hollandia on 22 April and Wakde Island (320 km west of Hollandia) on 17 May 1944. Early June the first of the three occupied airfields near Hollandia could be used and from June onwards the T.S.M. made many additional flights to New Guinea, via Merauke to Hollandia and Wakde. From June twice a week a C-47 flew to Merauke, one of the aircraft remaining at Merauke for a week for the support of the SONICA, the Senior Officer NICA on Dutch New Guinea. This aircraft once a week flew to Hollandia and Wakde Island, apart from unscheduled flights. The latter included support for the NEFIS and KNIL. In June and July many dozens of liberated Dutch PoWs and civilian internees were transported via Merauke to Australia while food and medicines were flown in together with NICA, NEFIS and KNIL personnel to strengthen the NICA and KNIL detachments which had landed with the assault forces. Many unscheduled sorties with both C-47s and TB-25s were flown but the air transport demands during the first few months

following the capture of Hollandia far exceeded capacity while the allies could offer little assistance due to operational requirements. [92]

The number of people the NICA detachments had to supply with food, clothing, shelter and medical treatment was much larger than expected. There were also hundreds of displaced civilians and Indonesian contract labourers who had worked for the Japanese on roads, airfields etc. but had been turned into slave labourers. Complete emergency villages had to be built and a large number of people had to be flown to Merauke. The U.S. Army did what it could to help out with food and other relief goods and USAAF C-47s flew a part of the liberated PoWs and civilians to Merauke. The Dutch Naval Air Service assisted with a flying boat in transports between Sydney and Merauke. The support by the T.S.M. was indispensable. Apart from the relief flights, the NEFIS staff members and operatives and NICA officials could not do their job without the support of the C-47s and the TB-25s. There was no other way of transport over the vast distances that had to be covered in New Guinea. A T.S.M. Dakota also landed on a clearing in the bush a couple of times to deliver and pick up KNIL troops or NEFIS operatives. [93]

American troops landed on the Dutch island Biak on 27 May conquering the three Japanese airstrips on 22 June. It took until August 1944 before the enemy forces on the island were defeated, though. Noemfoor Island was invaded by allied troops on 2 July. Two of the three Japanese airfields on the island could be taken into use. The weekly flight from Merauke to Hollandia and Wakde Island was quickly extended to Noemfoor and Biak during July. Also in these new landing operations a guide/interpreter detachment of the KNIL and a NICA detachment supported the landing force, the detachments landing with the troops on D-Day in each operation. On 30 July the Americans landed at Sansapur, Mar, Middelburg Island and Amsterdam Island in the western part of the Vogelkop, the final landing operation in Dutch New Guinea. The Japanese offered no resistance and at Middelburg and Mar airfields (the latter called Sansapur airfield) were quickly built from scratch by laying PSP. C-47s and TB-25s of the T.S.M. were there just a few days after the Sansapur airstrip became operational on 3 September. [94]



Dakota DT939 on a grass strip in Dutch New Guinea delivering a KNIL platoon for a patrol (O.G. Ward, via author).

The need for air transport exploded. The number of KNIL PoWs liberated on Dutch New Guinea alone amounted to 572. [95] Fortunately two new Dakotas (DT943 and DT944) were accepted in June bringing the strength of the T.S.M. on 1 August 1944 to eight C-47s, four TB-25s and four L12As (not counting the aircraft with 120 Squadron NEI), still 16 in all as the two Lodestars (LT931 and LT936) were both given on loan to the RAAF on 18 July. See Appendix 2 for individual aircraft details.

The T.S.M. becoming a squadron

A new major transport job came along in August 1944 when the NEI Government-in-exile (apart from a part of the War Office), the NICA Staff and all executive agencies of the Departments were transferred from Melbourne to Brisbane. Columbia Camp (ex U.S. Army) had come available for the NEI and additional office space and temporary sleeping accommodation for aircrew had been hired nearby. Preparations and transport flights from Melbourne to Archerfield, Brisbane started in June when the T.S.M. moved a part of the NEFIS staff in advance. The main NEFIS party with a large number of files travelled by train. On 9 August the first echelon was transported, followed by a second echelon one week later. A total of 16 C-47s and other transports were used, including

a number of assisting Australian aircraft. The P.E.P. did the servicing with a detachment led by Kap P. Schelling at Archerfield. [96] T.S.M. itself was also to move to Brisbane and received its movement orders on 8 September. [97]

The growth of the T.S.M. in numbers of aircraft, the announced transfer from Melbourne to Brisbane and the promise of more C-47s for the unit (C-47Bs with engines optimised for high level flight as preferred for missions across the mountain ridge in New Guinea) brought a new status and a new designation. On 1 September 1944 the section became an independent unit and was renamed No 1 N.E.I. Transport Squadron (1 N.E.I.T.S.). [98]

Dakota DT942 ran off the runway at Cairns due to weather conditions on 5 September but there was no serious damage and it was soon repaired. The next day 1 N.E.I.T.S. suffered a heavy loss, though. Dakota DT941 on its way back from Merauke with seven relieved fighter pilots of 120 Squadron N.E.I., three NEFIS officers (two KNIL and one RNN), two RNN NCOs (probably also NEFIS operatives), one RAAF officer, one AASC officer and two Red Cross nurses plus some freight went missing in bad weather near Cairns. No trace of the airplane or its passengers could be found. Missing presumably killed were all 16 passengers, pilots Elt H.J.H. Daanen and Sgt W.A. Torn, aviation wireless operator Sgt E. Kerdijk and flight mechanic Sgt J.F. Damwijk. The wreckage of the aircraft was found in January 1989. [99]

During the one week detachment at Merauke a C-47 of the squadron on 22 September operated from Hollandia to rescue 19 persons of a KNIL guerrilla group. This was the so-called group Kokkelink which had been operating for two and a half years behind enemy lines in the Vogelkop. It was evacuated from an improvised grass strip and flown to Hollandia. The six men NEFIS unit which had been parachuted in first to locate the group and ready a suitable strip was evacuated at the same time. [100] Shortly after, in October 1944, the squadron started to fly on Morotai in the northern part of the Halmahera Islands. Morotai was attacked by allied troops on 15 September. Both of the Merauke based C-47s were part of the air search for a missing CAC Wirraway communications aircraft of 120 Squadron N.E.I. flown by Elt B. Sandberg, Esq. on



Dakota DT944 "GROBAK" at Archerfield, Brisbane c. October 1944 (via Gerard Casius).

7 December. The aircraft was not found despite an intensive search although both the pilot and his passenger were later rescued after reaching the village Kikori. NEI Dakotas also assisted in other searches for missing USAAF and RAAF aircraft but these too could not be located by the searching aircraft. [101]

Apart from the four former KNILM fight engineers mentioned above many of the personnel posted in the period of February up to and including May 1944 were transferred during the period of 1 June up to and including 1 October 1944. In June the original about five fighter pilots were transferred to the P.E.P. to be readied for combat while Tlt Heikoop left for the P.E.P. to be retrained as a fighter pilot on the Curtiss P-40. He had originally been in training as a fighter pilot on the Brewster 339 before he was sent to Australia on 1 March 1942 to ferry B-25s. [102] In July three new fighter pilots, Elt P.H. Stam, Tlt P.J. de Jager and Tlt J.R.W. Hoekstra, relieved at 120 Squadron N.E.I., were posted as 2nd pilot. They did also receive some training on the Lockheed L12A in October before leaving to the P.E.P. [103] Flight mechanic SM Van Rassel went to the P.E.P. in August to follow a B-25 transition course to become a 2nd pilot on the type. He graduated late October without

problems but it took the War Office until 1 March 1945 to grant him the ML pilot and observer licenses. [104]

All of the original aviation wireless operators apart from SM Weber were also transferred. A number of them became wireless operator at a NEI radio station of the so-called Regerings Verbindingsdienst (Government Communication Service) for a ground-tour. [105] Replacements always arrived quickly apart from additional flight mechanics who did not become available until April and May 1945. [106]

Elt Hagers was posted to the P.E.P. on 1 October 1944 after having flown a leaflet dropping mission in one of two specially modified B-25s (N5-185) of 18 Squadron N.E.I. from Potshot to Japanese PoW and internment camps in Java with SM Van der Heiden as 2nd pilot, as mentioned above. SM Van der Heijden of the T.S.M. flew as a wireless operator in the other B-25 (N5-180) flown by Kap Van Breemen and Elt G. Cooke, the latter coming from the P.E.P., as did navigator Kap H. Elink Schuurman and airgunner SM J.G.M. van Neer. All pilots and crew members had volunteered for the mission. Take off was at c. 24:00 hrs on 23 September, the N5-185 landing first after 12 hours and 15 minutes, the N5-180 returning safely at Potshot after 13 hours and 30 minutes. [107] Van der Heiden was posted at the P.E.P. as a test and ferry pilot on 1 October but was seconded to the Detachment Melbourne to be able to act as acceptance test pilot with ANA at Essendon. He also gave the L12A instruction to the afore mentioned three P-40 pilots on the L2-103 which had some hours remaining before overhaul with ANA. [108]

The strength of 1 N.E.I.T.S. had grown to 109 ML men and about 60 RAAF and civilian Australian personnel on 1 September 1944. [109] With an actual personnel complement of only approximately 170, there was just enough technical personnel for the daily maintenance including 50-hours (C-47) and 40-hours (C-60) inspections but no possibilities to perform 100-hours or 80-hours inspections on C-47s, respectively the C-60s. These had to be done at ANA. TB-25s went to the P.E.P. for their 100-hours inspections. Major overhauls and repairs on TB-25s had been done at RAAF Air Depots but were switched to ANA at Essendon in September 1944. [110]

Transferred to Brisbane

No 1 N.E.I.T.S. was transferred to Archerfield on 1 October and completed the transfer on the 8th of that month. [111] The USAAF had largely left Archerfield due to the transfer of units in Australia to New Guinea leaving room for the NEI unit. Early August 1944 the ML was already hiring civilian technical personnel in Brisbane for the squadron. This had become available because of the run-down of maintenance and repair activities at Archerfield due to the transfer of the 81 Air Depot Group of the USAAF to New Guinea, as already mentioned. Around 100 technicians could be contracted for 1 N.E.I.T.S. and 2 N.E.I.T.S. to replace and supplement the RAAF personnel seconded from the P.E.P. [112] The ML personnel strength of 1 N.E.I.T.S. still stood at 109 on 1 October. Four new fighter pilots were posted in October 1944. They were: Elt H.H.J. Simons, who became 1st pilot as he was a former KNILM pilot already mobilised in January 1942, Elt J.C.N. van Boldrik, SM T.H. Gottschalk and Sgt L.H. Haye. The latter three becoming 2nd pilot. [113]

With the NEI Government-in-exile and the staffs of their executive agencies in Brisbane but the Lieutenant Governor-General of the NEI (from late October 1944) and the acting CG KNIL with small staffs plus a part of the NEI War Office still in Melbourne, frequent travelling of officials between Melbourne and Brisbane and between Melbourne and other cities necessitated a twice a week air transport service between Melbourne and Brisbane. This service was flown by 1 N.E.I.T.S. via Canberra and Sydney and was started in June after the NEFIS had been moved from Melbourne to Brisbane. [114] The route to Batchelor was still flown once a week and as mentioned two aircraft a week flew to Merauke, one aircraft remaining to fly the route to Biak. Sydney was a regular stop to supply a RNN detachment based there. Also Dutch Navy personnel and NEFIS teams were regularly transferred to Sydney. The NEFIS teams to be put ashore in New Guinea at night, either by flying boat or submarine. In October 1944 the first flights from Brisbane via Darwin to Morotai in the Halmahera island group were made. Later the weekly flight via Merauke, Hollandia, Wakde Island, Noemfoor and Biak was extended to Morotai.

Apart from these scheduled services many additional flights had to be carried out when crew shifts of the NEI units were in order, passengers,

equipment or spare parts had to be transported, liberated PoWs and civilian internees had to be flown from New Guinea to Australia etc. Also the RAAF often asked to transport limited amounts of freight or one or a few passengers but mostly between stops on regular routes. The flights in New Guinea and those between Merauke and Brisbane were made in close co-operation with the American 374th TCG and excess capacity was made available to this unit whenever asked. One or two Americans could also regularly be seen as a passenger on the scheduled routes within Australia. This paid off frequently, the Americans always willing to assist in return. [115]



Sgt S.R. de Kadt, pilot of the L12A L2-103 based at Essendon, Melbourne for flights with officials of the NEI Headquarters in Melbourne, photographed on 25 October 1945 (official photograph Netherlands Indies Government Information Service, via Gerard Casius).

The L12As were regularly used as Staff or VIP aircraft to transport officials between Melbourne and Brisbane and from Melbourne or Brisbane to other cities for inspections of NEI units, conferences, graduations of NEI students at RAAF schools etc. The L12A strength (minus the aircraft seconded to 120 Squadron N.E.I.) became three from early October 1944. From late October there were usually two L12As (with crews) based at Essendon, initially one from the P.E.P. or 1 N.E.I.T.S. and the other one from 2 N.E.I.T.S. On longer trips such as to Merauke and Hollandia the dignitaries usually used a C-47. For example, the Lieutenant Governor-General of the NEI Dr. H.J. van Mook and the acting KNIL CG Lt Gen L.H. van Oyen with their aids visited Merauke per C-47 on 30 November. The Chief of Staff of the KNIL Kol W.G.L. Weyerman followed on 13 December 1944 and also travelled to Merauke with a C-47. [116]

Maintenance problems

The head of the C Department of the NEI War Office, LKol B.J. Fiedeldij, already concluded an agreement with the Director of Aircraft Production and ANA in January 1944, as mentioned above. ANA would do part of the inspections of the C-47s (100-hours) and C-60s (80-hours) and also smaller repairs at Essendon, Melbourne and major overhauls and major repairs at Mascot, Sydney (C-47s, 300-hours inspections) and Parafield, Adelaide (C-60s, 240- and 480-hours inspections). Engine overhaul and repair was done by the RAAF at Waga Waga as the Department of Aircraft Production could offer no capacity for complete engine overhaul, although ANA did engine changes. The ML had had trouble with especially the 100-hours inspections and major overhauls of its C-47s when at Melbourne as these could not be carried out with any priority. No 1 N.E.I.T.S. was neither AAF SWPA assigned nor a RAAF squadron integrated in the RAAF organization. Work for the ML could, consequently, not get any priority by order of the Director of Aircraft Production. The RAAF (apart from the engines) had no overhaul capacity for C-47s available and working with Australian civilian companies via the Australian Department of Aircraft Production had its limitations. Without any priority these could not be solved as they were largely caused by personnel shortages with the overburdened ANA. [117]

The ML concluded a new contract with ANA and the Department of Aircraft Production on 18 September 1944 due to the coming transfer of 1 N.E.I.T.S. to Archerfield, Brisbane, the status change of the T.A. Brisbane which had become 2 N.E.I.T.S. and the switch of B-25 major overhauls and repairs from RAAF Air Depots to ANA at Essendon. The aircraft inspections and smaller repairs on C-47s and C-60s done at Essendon were now to be carried out by ANA at Archerfield, while C-47 overhauls and major repairs were still to be done at Mascot and those of the C-60s at Parafield. The overhaul and repair of the aircraft engines were carried out by the RAAF with 5 AD at Waga-Waga (NSW) and remained there. [118]

In January 1945 a new agreement with the Department of Aircraft Production was concluded with the inspections and smaller repairs at Archerfield now to be carried out with ANA and Qantas Airlines. The two companies shared the repair and maintenance facilities in two of the so-called Igloos of the Department of Aircraft Production at the airfield. The name of these large hangars referred to their pillar-less construction. Major overhauls and repairs of the C-47s and C-60s remained at Mascot, Sydney, respectively Parafield, Adelaide. Work on the TB-25s was done by the P.E.P. as mentioned, apart from the major overhauls and repairs by ANA at Essendon. The P.E.P. also did most of the needed L12A work apart from major overhauls which were done with ANA at Essendon. [119]

The two NEI transport squadrons merged

As there was no more Australian civilian technical personnel available for hiring and as no additional ML technicians could be posted, 100-hours inspections and some of the minor repair work could not be done at the squadron. Due to these shortages of technical personnel 1 N.E.I.T.S. was merged with 2 N.E.I.T.S. on 7 November 1944. The latter unit was already based at Archerfield since its establishment as a NEI unit, as described above. No 2 N.E.I.T.S. transferred all of its equipment to the P.E.P. on 7 November apart from a TB-25 and a L12A based in Melbourne and three Lodestars which were transferred to 1 N.E.I.T.S. on 7 November. [120]

The original plan of August 1944 had been to station one of the two squadrons at Biak but this would take quite some time as there was no ground personnel that could be based there apart from a small number of ML technicians. There was an insufficient number of off-combat flying personnel available to furnish both squadrons with an enlarged flying echelon as well. [121] Also Headquarters AAF SWPA had frowned upon the two air transport squadrons established on 1 September 1944 as neither of them had been put under AAF SWPA command. The merger was completed in a week with all the personnel of 2 N.E.I.T.S. administratively transferred to 1 N.E.I.T.S., as the result of the merger was called, on 15 November. Transport missions to and from destinations in Dutch New Guinea became an ever more important part of the squadron effort and the single but larger squadron meant efficiency gains. On flights to Biak former 2 N.E.I.T.S. personnel to their surprise ran into former 21st TCS colleagues. Their squadron had just been moved to Biak on 14 October. With the merger completed on 15 November No 2 N.E.I.T.S. was dissolved on the same day. Maj De Mul remained in charge of the combined unit. [122]

Just before the merger in October and just after during November 1944 six new relieved 18 Squadron N.E.I. pilots were posted: Elt A.F. Calkoen, LL.M., Elt J.M. Lagerwerff, Ovl II (RNN) F. Streuding, Elt D. Stock, Kap S. de Jong and Sgt F. Noordhoorn. Also five relieved 18 Squadron N.E.I. aviation wireless operators, Sgt Tan Kiem Sian, Adj K. de Bruyn, Sgt N. van der Giessen, Kpl E.W. Isaak and Kpl (RNN) M.E. Felix, arrived in the same period. [123] At the end of December 1944 Ovl II (RNN) H.J.R. van der Kop arrived from the Detachment of the Dutch Naval Air Service in Sydney. When with the RNMFS he had been trained on the B-25 as well as on the Consolidated PBY Catalina. [124]

A relatively large number of 1 N.E.I.T.S. personnel was transferred to the P.E.P. in the period of October up to and including December 1944, mostly for a B-25 refresher as during January and February 1945 some seven of the flying crews in 18 Squadron N.E.I. had to be relieved again. Also a few of the "old hands" were transferred in December or on 1 January 1945 including pilots Kap Van der Griend and Kap Meeuwenoord. The arrival of the 2 N.E.I.T.S. personnel therefore did not

raise the NEI personnel strength and the number of ML personnel was actually slightly reduced to exactly 100 men on 1 January 1945. [125]



Dakota DT940 just after landing at Batchelor on a support flight for 18 Squadron N.E.I., filmed in February 1945 (B.J. van Kregten, via Gerard Casius).

There were also approximately 100 Australian civilians at that date. The strength hardly grew during January. Although several former 18 Squadron N.E.I. pilots and crew members arrived the three fighter pilots posted as 2nd pilot were transferred to the P.E.P. for a P-40 refresher on 7 January 1945. [126]

The new combined squadron was equipped with 19 transport and communication aircraft: seven C-47s, three C-60As, five TB-25s and four L12As (not counting the L12A with 120 Squadron N.E.I.). See Appendix 2 for individual aircraft details. In December 1944 this strength was maintained but TB-25 N5-180 was withdrawn from strength in January or February and not replaced. Lodestar LT936 became damaged beyond repair in January or early February when a cyclone passed. The aircraft was written off on 19 February. Possibly, the N5-180 was also damaged by the cyclone and taken off strength. On 21 January 1945 former Head of Flying Operations KNILM and former Operations Officer of 18

Squadron N.E.I. and CO of 2 N.E.I.T.S. Maj Wittert van Hoogland arrived to take up duties as deputy CO. He also delivered Mitchell N5-154 from the P.E.P. which was returned after maintenance. [127]

Maj Wittert van Hoogland succeeded Kap Van Messel who had fulfilled the deputy CO position since the merger and became responsible for test flying and training. Van Messel received further training on the TB-25 during February and March from Wittert van Hoogland to ready him for his new position. [128] ML personnel strength was 99 men on 1 March, including the flying personnel for 11 available full crews (that is four men crews including a flight mechanic). [129]

Late April 1945 LKol W.C.J. Versteegh became De Mul's successor, Maj Wittert van Hoogland remaining deputy CO. In April the squadron also got a new technical officer Kap J.D. Wieringa, former KNILM as well, who was to become head of the Technical Service. Olt Plesman was transferred to 18 Squadron N.E.I. in the following month. [130] During March two new C-47Bs were received while the number of L12As was reduced to three again during March-April 1945. The 120 Squadron N.E.I. aircraft was no longer seconded from 1 N.E.I.T.S. to this squadron but from the P.E.P. ML personnel strength on 1 April still stood at 99 but there were 13 available full crews now. On 1 May the NEI strength had become 112, including the personnel for 14 full crews. There were approximately 110 Australian civilians. [131] The aircraft strength of 18 at the end of April was composed of nine C-47A/Bs, two C-60As, four TB-25s and three L12As. See Appendix 2 for individual aircraft details.

On 22 March 1945 KNILM director Versteegh had left New York, the temporary seat of the KNILM direction, for Australia. He had been given the instruction to prepare for the establishment of a KNILM air transport service that was to operate under the authority of the CG KNIL. A political deal which included Versteegh becoming CO of 1 N.E.I.T.S. Versteegh's plan was discussed at the end of May between the acting CG KNIL and the Director of Public Works and envisaged the build-up of a Government Air Transport Service next to 1 N.E.I.T.S. This organization to be manned with civilian personnel and to be equipped with a part of the 1 N.E.I.T.S. fleet. It was to develop in due course into a new NEI airline. LKol Fiedeldij of the NEI War Office had supported the proposals of LKol Versteegh but the NEI Government-in-exile thought it

was too early to make a start with the rebuilding of the KNILM. Versteegh was already installed as CO of 1 N.E.I.T.S., however, in which position (he also remained director of the KNILM) he actively tried to gradually turn this unit into a new KNILM. [132]

The TB-25s of the transport squadron were mostly old and worn and required a lot of maintenance partly at the cost of C-47 maintenance. They were planned to be replaced by C-47s. On 24 May, respectively 15 June 1945 two new C-47Bs (DT947, respectively DT948) were accepted after the ferry flight to Australia, two more following on 14, respectively 16 July (DT949, respectively DT950). The two remaining Lodestars (LT933 and LT934) were both offered to the RAAF in May already and transferred on loan to the RAAF on 5 June. [133]

The personnel strength slowly grew into the direction of the formal establishment of 265 men with (still) 112 ML men including the personnel for 14 available full crews and 110 Australian civilians on 1 June. During July again flying personnel moved in and out as a result of crew changes with 18 Squadron N.E.I. By early August there were 98 NEI personnel of which around 25 ground staff, including a few Dutch civilians, and 110 Australian civilians. [134] The aircraft strength had grown to 20 on 1 August and consisted of 13 C-47A/Bs, four TB-25s and three L12As (of which one based at Essendon). See Appendix 2 for individual aircraft details.

Becoming a RAAF Squadron

Five more TB-25s were received in the period of 1 up to and including 10 August 1945. See Appendix 2 for individual aircraft details. However, TB-25 N5-143 was unserviceable from at least early August and was taken off charge that month due to its technical condition. It was written off on 6 September. Aircraft N5-129 was taken in for maintenance by the P.E.P. early September but was replaced. The aircraft strength thus became 24 aircraft. More ML and Australian civilian personnel reached the unit as well and on 15 August the total personnel strength was approximately 240. [135] These enlargements had been triggered by messages that the RAAF would recognise the unit as a RAAF Squadron, No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron. Already on 8 June 1945 the Australian Air Board approved formation of a N.E.I. Transport Squadron (and also a Repair and

Servicing Unit in 1946) upon which the Ministry for Air agreed as well (see below).



Two of the new C-47Bs at Amberley, Brisbane in June 1945 (official photograph of the Netherlands Indies Government Information Service, via author).

On 8 September 1945 around 25 Dutch war volunteers arrived for training as assistant mechanic with the squadron. The war volunteers had started mechanic training at 1 Engineering School RAAF in Melbourne early August. Shortly after VJ Day (15 August), some two weeks after the start of the training course, it was abruptly ended however. The squadron had finally reached its formal strength albeit with a large number of Australian civilians still to be replaced by ML personnel in due course and a group of apprentices it had to train itself. [136]

By now the scheduled services of the squadron had further grown. On 1 May 1945 allied troops, mostly Australian but with one Company of the Royal NEI Army attached, landed on Tarakan. On 1 July 1945 Balikpapan was attacked. Again the allied force was mostly composed of Australian troops which had one NEI Company attached. Also NICA detachments and KNIL guide/interpreter detachments landed with the



Seventeen of the war volunteers from the Netherlands pose in front of the L2-102 of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron in October-November 1945 at Archerfield (W. Vredeling, via Gerard Casius).

troops while NEFIS operatives and analysts had helped prepare the plans for these landings. Both the airstrip in Tarakan and that conquered at Balikpapan were in use from July 1945. C-47s of 1 N.E.I.T.S. could be seen at the airfield of Balikpapan almost immediately, first flying in NICA personnel. They became regular visitors as 18 Squadron N.E.I. was transferred to this airfield in July, the first B-25s arriving in the next month. The weekly service from Brisbane to Morotai via Merauke, Hollandia and Biak was extended to Balikpapan. [137]

Already from June 1944 former KNILM personnel serving with the T.S.M./1 N.E.I.T.S., the P.E.P. and 18 Squadron N.E.I. was gradually reposted to the T.A. Brisbane/2 N.E.I.T.S. and from 15 November 1944 concentrated in 1 N.E.I.T.S. LKol Versteegh even succeeded in bringing back to Australia a few former KNILM technicians transferred to the KLM in the West Indies, including Adj F. Lischer who became a civilian chief mechanic on 11 May. Also in May 1945 chief mechanic Olt H.M. van Herk arrived from the P.E.P. With all the former KNILM flight engineers still serving as such with the ML as well as a fair number of regular ML mechanics with experience in 100-hours inspections on Glenn Martin

139 bombers or Lodestars No 1 N.E.I.T.S. finally had the capacity and expertise to perform 100-hour inspections on C-47s itself. This solved to a large part the problems with ANA and Quantas Airlines. Only one problem remained, though, spares supply. [138]

No 1 N.E.I.T.S. was not recognised as a first line transport squadron by the GHQ SWPA as it was in part responsible for “national tasks” and in part for front line troop carrier assignments (the supply of 18 and 120 Squadrons N.E.I. and Royal N.E.I. Army units in New Guinea). Operations of KNIL Infantry units and ML units as well as relief missions in Dutch New Guinea had brought a GHQ SWPA okay for the six additional C-47Bs but the spares supply did not take the intensity of national tasks into account and was therefore “tight”. [139] The unit could be put under allied command of the AAF SWPA or integrated in the RAAF as a RAAF Squadron to solve this. The first would mean that national tasks for the NEI Government and its executive agencies could no longer be carried out with any priority. A further expansion of the national tasks of the squadron was foreseen, however, as allied forces were steadily liberating more parts of the NEI archipelago. Recognition as a squadron by the RAAF was the solution sought, therefore, and formally asked for on 15 May 1945. Already on 20 April a RAAF so-called Squadron P18 Form had (somewhat reluctantly) been sent to the RAAF Air Board “to the intension to recognise 1 N.E.I.T.S. as a transport squadron with 24 Unit-Equipment”. The RAAF raised objections and asked for more NEI ground personnel and further replacement of RAAF personnel in the existing NEI squadrons, as was expected. [140]

More ML personnel was on its way as hundreds of war volunteers had been recruited for the ML in the Netherlands. During June and July 1945 already 333 recruits for the ML arrived in Australia, 227 of which destined for ground positions, the larger part to be trained by the RAAF. The RAAF Air Board and the Department of Air were satisfied and informed the NEI Government-in-exile in June respectively July that the N.E.I.T.S. would be recognised as a RAAF Squadron. This was effectuated on 15 August 1945. [141] It did not help, though, as very unexpectedly and by sheer coincidence the war ended on the same day. About a month later Lend-Lease ended and with it the spare parts supply for Lend-Lease supplied aircraft including the NEI Lodestars, Dakotas (apart from one



TB-25s N5-142 and N5-148 are being prepared for issue to 1 N.E.I.T.S. at the P.E.P., Canberra early August 1945 (collection Gerben Tornij).

which was Dutch owned) and Mitchells. Although the final spares packages (ordered through RAAF channels as usual) did arrive as planned in October-November 1945, due to very busy flight schedules after VJ Day new ways had to be found to keep the fleet operational, especially the C-47s. No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron for a while even resorted to trading whisky for spare parts, bribing some of the Americans working with the large USAAF stores at Biak. [142] Surplus USAAF C-47s of which some were taken apart for spares, soon alleviated the problems, however.

No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron, the ML RAPWI Detachment and the Base Ops Andir unit

The initial post-war effort of 19 (NEI) Squadron and the N.E.I.-P.E.P.

VJ Day was extensively celebrated in all NEI units and 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron even played a small role in the preparations for the surrender ceremony in Tokyo. Kap Van Messel on 21 August flew Lt Gen L.H. van Oyen, the acting KNIL CG who would attend on behalf of the NEI Government-in-exile, in a C-47 from Archerfield to Manila. [143] The General would travel from Clark Field by USAAF C-54 to Tokyo. In the meantime transport requirements exploded as an estimated 200,000 people, NEI and allied PoWs and civilian internees in concentration camps in the NEI, were in need of food and medicines as they were on the brink of starvation. A figure that soon proved to be far too low. Especially in Java and Sumatra problems were to be expected. The RAF was relatively far away having fought in Burma. It could spare only one transport squadron, No 31 flying C-47s, for missions to destinations in Sumatra, Java, Bali and Lombok that had become the area of British responsibility per 15 August 1945. [144] In Java evacuation of internees was problematic due to a lack of intelligence and actions of Japanese armed Indonesian nationalists. A part of 31 Squadron started flying from



Dakota's of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron at Archerfield, Brisbane in September 1945 with two Lockheed L12As parked behind them (W.C.J. Versteegh, via Gerard Casius).

Kemajoran, Batavia in Java on 24 September and the squadron was fully based at Kemajoran by 30 October. Other British units started flying on airfields in Sumatra, initially using Medan, in October. [145]

In the Australian operational area consisting of Borneo, Celebes, the Molucca's and the other NEI islands in the East the RAAF started to fly relief operations in September in close co-operation with local NICA teams. The latter were led by the SONICA (senior officer NICA) Kol C. Giebel in Morotai. The RAAF started to demobilise in September already which especially handicapped 18 Squadron N.E.I. at Balikpapan and the N.E.I.-P.E.P. which completed a transfer to Bundaberg on 10 September. The final groups of RAAF personnel left the NEI units in November 1945 apart from one liaison officer per unit. Relief flights by RAAF units continued, however. The RAAF also kept airbase detachments at conquered airfields in Borneo, Celebes and the NEI islands further to the East, including Ambon and Timor. These too were gradually withdrawn, starting in January 1946. The RAAF relief activities were turned over to the NICA (then called AMACAB, see later) in the period of January up to and including April 1946. With the exception of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron the NEI units were taken out of the RAAF organization on 15 January 1946. No 18 Squadron N.E.I., 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron and 120 Squadron N.E.I. were to come under British operational command at the moment they would be based in Java. [146]

No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron was first ordered to fly to Java a part of the NEI contingent for the so-called Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI) organization, established by the British SEAC. The NEI contingent consisted of doctors, nurses and other support personnel and carried medical equipment, food and other supplies. They were transported in five C-47s (including DT940, DT942 and DT943) commanded by Maj Wittert van Hoogland. The other C-47 Captains included Kap J.L.M. Theunissen Sr, Elt J.S.T. Theunissen Jr and Olt J.E. de Jongh. Six TB-25s of the N.E.I.-P.E.P. were to carry part of the passengers and freight and were commanded by Maj Van Breemen. A number of the assigned aircraft first flew to Melbourne to pick up some of the personnel and freight for Java on 7 September, other passengers were to be picked up en route.

The five C-47s and five of the TB-25s left Archerfield on the next day flying via Townsville to Merauke. The following day the planes flew via Biak to Morotai. Four of the five C-47s and all five B-25s reached Balikpapan on 10 September without problems. The remaining C-47

followed on the same day after repairs to one of the engines at Biak. Unfortunately this aircraft developed more serious engine trouble between Morotai and Balikpapan. The passengers had to throw overboard much of the load while the aircraft struggled to reach its destination on one engine. It just made it and arrived on the last drops of fuel, the aircraft having to be towed off the runway by a tractor. A new engine was flown in from Australia and mounted in three days. [147]

One of the TB-25s flew former 18 Squadron N.E.I. and N.E.I.-P.E.P. CO LKol Asjes, M.Sc., the leader of the NEI RAPWI contingent for Java, and part of his staff to Singapore on 11 September. On the same day the remaining sixth P.E.P. TB-25 (N5-129, Captain Kap H.J.A.C. Arens) reached Singapore via Darwin, Morotai and Balikpapan with among others NEI government representative Gen Maj N.L.W. van Straten (Chief of Staff Royal NEI Army) who had been picked up in Melbourne on 7 September. On 13 September three of the C-47s flew to Makassar to check the conditions there. The crews evacuated about 100 NEI PoWs and civilian internees to Balikpapan. LKol Asjes returned from Singapore on the same day and reported that the British contingent for the RAPWI organization in Java would arrive in Batavia in a couple of days by ship from Singapore. The SEAC occupation force for Java was not yet ready to sail, however, and there was consequently no permission to fly to Batavia yet. Kap Arens and his crew members, nevertheless, flew the N5-129 from Singapore to Batavia's former civilian airfield Kemajoran on 13 September. Arens had been asked by the British authorities to fly two intelligence officers to Batavia. It was the first landing of an allied aircraft in Java after VJ Day. Arens returned to Singapore on the same day, as did Asjes. [148]

Maj Wittert van Hoogland flew to Singapore with the DT943 on the 15th to check things for himself. He met Kap Arens there who had first-hand knowledge of the conditions in a few of the internment camps around Batavia. Wittert van Hoogland got permission to fly to Kemajoran but without any safety guarantee as the British occupation troops had not yet landed in Java. Personnel of the British RAPWI organization, a number of NEI officials who had been in Singapore for conferences and a small protection force arrived in Batavia by ship on 15 September, though. On the 16th LKol Asjes and a group of seven other NEI RAPWI staff

members flew from Singapore to Kemajoran with the N5-129 to prepare for the arrival of the C-47s and TB-25s still at Balikpapan and Singapore. The next day these finally reached Kemajoran, the C-47 of Wittert van Hoogland from Singapore and the other aircraft from Balikpapan. One of the C-47s had first picked up a load of 100-Octane fuel in drums in Singapore as it was not known whether there was 100-Octane fuel available in Batavia. It was not. [149]

Asjes welcomed the crews and took command of the NEI RAPWI contingent. The aircraft were then used for the first flights to other airfields in Java to check conditions and fly in relief goods, for flights to Singapore to ferry fuel drums to Kemajoran (three of the C-47s on 18, 19 and 20 September) and flights to Balikpapan to pick up more relief goods. The first flights to Andir (Bandoeng) were made on 19 September. [150] Maj Wittert van Hoogland made flights to Semarang



C-47Bs of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron at Archerfield. In front and on the propeller hub three of the war volunteers from Holland who arrived in September 1945 for further training as assistant mechanic (collection Hans Berfelo).

and Andir before leaving for Australia on 21 September, carrying as passengers 22 liberated Australian officers, the first to return home. Wittert van Hoogland was the first to leave Kemajoran, the other aircraft following spread over a number of days. All aircraft still carried in large letters RAPWI on the fuselage as demanded by the British. [151]

The C-47s and TB-25s returned with evacuees who needed urgent medical attention and some liberated PoWs and civilian internees who were fit enough to be retrained at the N.E.I.-P.E.P., could be immediately posted to 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron or were needed with Government agencies. After their return as many flights to Balikpapan and Kemajoran as could be organized were flown. TB-25s and some of the C-47s of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron and TB-25s of the N.E.I.-P.E.P. did most of the transport flights within Australia to collect recently purchased relief goods or goods purchased earlier and stored by the Netherlands Indies Government Import and Export Organization (NIGIEO) in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane and flew these to Archerfield. [152] The goods were often reloaded into RAPWI prescribed standard packages at Archerfield and flown to Balikpapan with C-47s and in part with TB-25s of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron and the N.E.I.-P.E.P. C-47s and TB-25s of the two units also going on to Java on many of the flights originating in the mentioned cities, however. The aircraft were either unloaded at Balikpapan with the goods transferred to 18 Squadron N.E.I. for air drops above the internment and PoW camps (until more airfields in Java would be secured) or flown on to Kemajoran for distribution in Java. [153]

By early October the route to Balikpapan had been extended to Kemajoran. It was now called “om de noord” (“around the North”) as early October a new route opened, the “om de zuid” (“around the South”) route, via Darwin, Koepang (Timor) and Balikpapan. The latter was appreciably shorter (by 4,000 km) which was very welcome as flying via New Guinea, Morotai and Balikpapan took almost 30 flying hours, getting the aircraft quickly up for 100-hours maintenance and off the flying schedule. Also the need for spare parts grew very quickly. Part of the traffic was switched immediately. The “om de noord” route could be shortened somewhat by making some flights, instead of via Morotai, via Makassar to Balikpapan after the passing of the Ambon-Ceram islands area had proven to be safe. This shortened route developed into a new scheduled C-47 service via Merauke, Hollandia, Ambon and Makassar to Batavia during the second half of October. Also the effort of the Dutch Naval Air Service, which flew with flying boats from Sydney, had become scheduled services in the second half of October. Once a week a flight from Sydney to Batavia was made and twice a week a flight from Sydney to Melbourne. [154]

In November 1945 the all out flight scheme of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron had become a largely scheduled one with three C-47s arriving at Kemajoran on different days every week, one flying via "Noord" (via Morotai), one flying via "Zuid" (via Timor) and one flying the new route via Ambon now called "Centraal" ("central"). Main problem still was the availability of 100-Octane fuel and the C-47s consequently had to fly from Balikpapan to Kemajoran via Singapore to refuel there, as was done on the return flight. Apart from the scheduled services many unscheduled flights with C-47s and TB-25s were made including a large number for the NICA. The non-scheduled flights were mostly made from Brisbane via Darwin and Truscott. On 1 October a C-47 flew Lieutenant-Governor-General Dr. Van Mook and acting CG KNIL Lt Gen Van Oyen with their personal staffs from Brisbane to Java. They safely arrived at Kemajoran on the next day. This was the first of a series of flights to return the staffs of the NEI Government Departments from Brisbane and Melbourne to Java in the period October-December 1945. [155]

Kol Giebel of the ML then SONICA of the islands Borneo, Celebes and the NEI islands further to the East was seconded to the CG of the 1st Australian Army Corps operating in this part of the NEI. Stationed at Morotai in September 1945, Giebel had to cover large distances to visit NICA teams made up by recently liberated former internees and introduce newly posted NICA personnel from Australia. He got a personal C-47 with crew. Captain of the first C-47 crew seconded to Giebel was Maj Wittert van Hoogland who arrived at Morotai on 6 October and flew with Giebel to Balikpapan. On the 8th Giebel flew via Tarakan to Labuan in Serawak (British Borneo) for a visit to the staff of the 9th Australian Division. This Division had occupied Brunei but was in part based in Dutch Borneo. A flight from Morotai to Languan in northern Celebes was made on the 9th, Giebels C-47 being the first allied aircraft to land there. The aircraft and crew went back to Brisbane on 10 October to be replaced by another C-47 and crew. As mentioned, the area covered was an Australian operational responsibility and RAAF aircraft including C-47s and B-24s converted for freight and passenger carrying made lots of relief flights in co-operation with Giebels staff and its subordinate NICA teams. [156]

C-47s and TB-25s could be flown to Kemajoran via Truscott in Western Australia and were so from late September. As mentioned above fuel at Kemajoran was scarce, however, as this had to be flown in from Singapore. In October 1945 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron flew 100-Octane aviation fuel in drums to Koepang therefore, first from Truscott from approximately 3 October until at least 6 October and then from Wyndham (Western Australia). [157] In slightly over a week making two or three trips a day Kap Van Messel later assisted by Kap Reijers in a second C-47 flew a large store of purchased 100-Octane fuel from Wyndham to Penfoei, on average ten drums of 220 Ltr. per flight. [158]

By December 1945 the British/NEI RAPWI organization had become a semi-government running airfields, imports, public services including police and judicial matters etc. It employed many NICA officials but also a large number of officers and NCOs of the NEI military services in particular of the KNIL. The organization included many ML men who had been made auxiliary police officer or fulfilled another public position. Both men from Australia and former PoWs and civilian internees were employed. The above mentioned NIGIEO, for example, bought large amounts of relief goods via the U.S. Foreign Liquidation Commissioner in October 1945. These purchases included textiles, clothing, shoes, tinned food and medicines, all coming from surplus U.S. Navy and U.S. Army stocks mostly stored in Finschhafen and Hollandia. The RAPWI organization coordinated everything and took care of necessary clearances and arranged for the transport and distribution.

LKol Asjes, initially head of the Combined RAPWI Control Staff Java, on 15 December 1945 became the Dutch representative of the RAPWI Coordination Branch of the British Staff Allied Forces NEI, meaning Chief RAPWI in Java and Sumatra. He rather desperately tried to get rid of the government tasks and concentrate on relief activities in close co-operation with the International Red Cross. He turned over activities to teams of the NEI Government departments including those of Public Works and Economic Affairs as quickly as possible. Officials of these departments tried to get the NEI economy restarted again and took over management of public services but this had to be done gradually. The Government departments took over most of the non-relief activities from RAPWI in December 1945 and January 1946. The ML and the

Department of Public Works took over a number of airfields in the course of 1946. [159]



Dakota DT939 of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron and a ML TB-25 of an unknown unit at Koepang, Timor late 1945 (B.J. van Kregten, via Gerard Casius)

Two to three C-47s were permanently stationed at Kemajoran in December 1945 and probably also in January 1946 for the support of the Government teams working in Java and Sumatra. The NIGIEO bought American surplus goods in Manila and on Dutch New Guinea for the departments ranging from complete mobile hospital inventories to engine repair shops. As there was a serious shortage of shipping capacity much of the former was transported by C-47. The Dutch and NEI ships impressed as troop transports and cargo ships in 1942 were still operating in allied shipping pools and, apart from a few, could not be missed for operations in the NEI. [160]

The rather strange mix of ML personnel, including some former KNILM personnel, and the largely civilian Australian ground crew of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron did a splendid job. In the final quarter of the year 1945 the unit transported 22,584 passengers and almost 1,100,000 kg of freight. To put the former somewhat in perspective, 18 Squadron N.E.I. with around the same number of aircraft (but disarmed B-25s only) from 4 September to the end of November 1945 transported 22,936 passengers of which approximately 7,000 were flown to Australia. It also transported a large

amount of freight. Contrary to the situation at 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron the latter was on average transported over much shorter distances with most flights from Balikpapan to destinations in Java. The total amount (although no figures survived time) must have been appreciably less than the amount transported by 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron as a B-25 could carry only slightly more than half a C-47 load. [161]

The ML RAPWI Detachment

Although 18 Squadron N.E.I. at Balikpapan was immediately tasked with parachute droppings of relief goods for RAPWI (which started on 4 September) and later with transport sorties to Kemajoran (from 20 September) there was still a need for reconnaissance, army support and a check on the movements of Japanese shipping in the period immediately following VJ Day. Nevertheless, the squadron also made relief flights to and from Australia, received (with one TB-25 already on strength) two additional TB-25 aircraft in August-September and was, in fact, almost fully deployed on relief operations for RAPWI with disarmed bombers from mid-October 1945 until February 1946. Initially 18 Squadron N.E.I. was assisted by 2 Squadron RAAF (B-25s) but this unit stopped all operations on 14 November 1945 to prepare for disbandment. [162]

More transport capacity was needed fast, however. Apart from re-tasking its medium-bomber squadron the only way the ML could enlarge the air transport capacity in the short term was by quickly modifying additional B-25s into TB-25s. This was done by the N.E.I.-P.E.P. at Bundaberg which unit formed a detachment at Kemajoran with six TB-25 aircraft to support the RAPWI-Air Department (RAPWI-AIR) headed by Kap Arens. This department was running airfields and managed servicing detachments (mostly composed of former PoWs) in Java and Sumatra, as well as a transport service using surrendered Japanese aircraft flown and maintained by Japanese personnel. After the initial maximum effort flight scheme a more permanent detachment at Kemajoran was gradually formed by the P.E.P. in the period of 1 up to and including 16 October 1945. CO of this "ML RAPWI Detachment" was Kap J.P. Welter. The pilots and crew members were a mix of personnel stationed at the P.E.P. and relieved 18 Squadron N.E.I. personnel, many having just



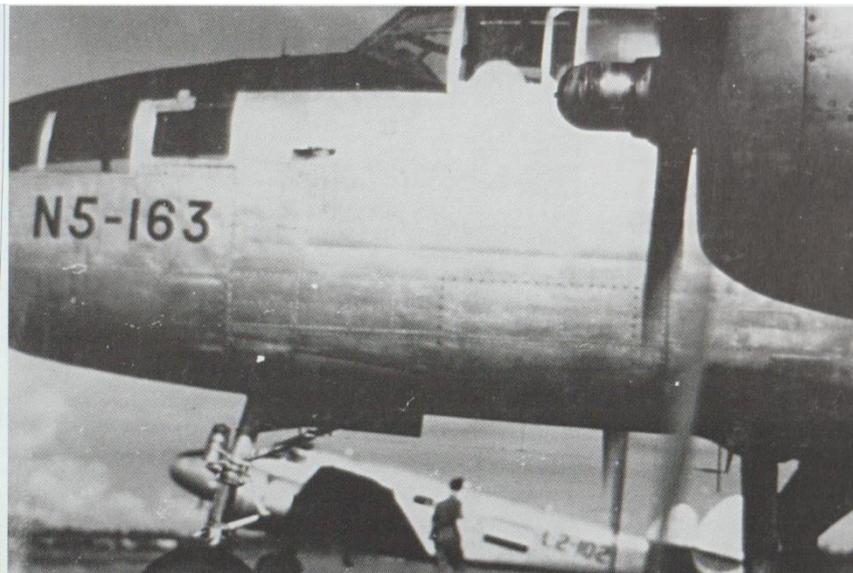
The N5-129 shortly after its RAPWI Detachment days. Operated by 18 Squadron from Tjililitan it was borrowed a few times by the detachment in January-February 1946, during which period this photograph was made. The letters RAPWI, carried in black on the nose, were removed in January 1946 but the contours are still visible. (Authors collection).

completed their second operational tour. See Appendix 3 for details on individual aircraft used. [163]

The TB-25 detachment augmented the improvised Flight of impressed Japanese communication and transport aircraft (“Arens Airlines”), formed by Kap Arens in September already, to supplement the relatively low number of RAF and NEI transport aircraft available and to put to good use the available 87- and 91-Octane Japanese fuel that could not be used in the allied aircraft. Main task of the detachment was the transport of freight and passengers within Java and later also Sumatra as road and rail transport took too long or was unsafe due to actions of Indonesian nationalists. The TB-25s also made flights to Singapore, Manila and Bangkok to pick up liberated NEI PoWs stranded there due to the lack of shipping capacity. Former PoWs were also picked up at Balikpapan and Morotai. Flights to Australia were made with liberated PoWs and civilian internees and to pick up freight and some passengers. Passenger carrying (allowed up to a maximum of 15) by TB-25s was a rather improvised affair as these aircraft were freight planes without

chairs or bucket seats. If need be up to 25 passengers were sometimes transported over short distances. [164]

The aircraft of the ML RAPWI Detachment were also used to train ex PoW pilots, aviation wireless operators and flight mechanics of the ML on the TB-25, the pilots being trained as 2nd pilot. The N.E.I.-P.E.P. aircraft were gradually exchanged for TB-25s newly assigned to 18 Squadron or were transferred to this unit, as were the crews. Also 18 Squadron was training ex PoWs on the TB-25 but at Tjililitan, the former military airbase of Batavia, from December 1945. Two TB-25s of the unit were based at Tjililitan in that month. After some months the more experienced 2nd pilots usually went to the P.E.P. at Bundaberg for further training as a 1st pilot and were replaced by others. Nevertheless, crew fatigue was a problem as the number of flying hours was high (100-120



Lockheed L12A L2-102 of the N.E.I.-P.E.P. probably photographed at Kemajoran in late September or early October 1945 when in use as a staff transport. Both LKoi Fiedeldij and LKoi Zomer regularly flew this ac. The TB-25 in front flew with the P.E.P. as well. After maintenance in Bundaberg the N5-163 was operated by the ML RAPWI Detachment from 16 October 1945 until 8 November 1945. The L2-102 went to 19 (N.E.I.) Sq in October 1945 (via Nico Geldhof).

hours a month per pilot/crew member), although somewhat lower than in 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron (150-200 hours a month) while there were no spare crews. [165]

Additional 1st pilots for the TB-25s were found by a quick 1st pilot course for B-25 2nd pilots at the N.E.I.-P.E.P. and even staff pilots took their turn

on the long flights between Australia and Java, including LKol B.J. Fiedeldij and LKol J.J. Zomer who combined airbase inspections with these flights. Both had been posted at the new ML Headquarters formed in Batavia late September-early October 1945, respectively as Chief of Staff and C-LSK i.e. CO of the Commando Luchtstrijdkrachten (Airforces Command). Fighter pilots and recently licensed or relicensed pilots (both fighter pilots and multi-engine pilots) were trained as B-25 2nd pilots at the P.E.P. or on the C-47 with 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron to fill vacancies. In February 1946 all six TB-25 aircraft and their crews were on the strength of 18 Squadron while the ML RAPWI Detachment at Kemajoran was dissolved again and absorbed by this unit on approximately 1 April 1946. At the latter date 18 Squadron completed its transfer from Balikpapan to Tjililitan. Kap Welter had already been transferred to the ML Headquarters at Batavia by then. [166]

The British/NEI RAPWI organization had been ending its activities from approximately 15 January. It stopped its work in the NEI on 24 January and was disbanded two days later. The NICA, now called Allied Military Administration-Civil Affairs Branch (AMACAB), although it was a purely NEI organisation, took over all relief and other remaining activities in the British area of responsibility. These activities remained addressed to as RAPWI for a number of months and the RAPWI activities were continued by AMACAB as they were until they could be taken over by the various Government departments in the course of 1946. [167]

The RAPWI-Air Department stopped its operations with Japanese aircraft on 15 April 1946 when all remaining Japanese aircraft were administratively attached to 18 Squadron at Tjililitan and concentrated at Tjililitan, Andir and Lahat (Sumatra). Flying operations with the aircraft were stopped in May 1946, however, apart from those with the Tachikawa Ki54 Soren, Mitsubishi Ki57 Topsy and Nakajima L2D Tabby communication and transport aircraft based at Andir (see below). The RAPWI-Air Department by then had already become a purely administrative organization which administered the final groups of personnel of the ML, Dutch Naval Air Service, Department of Public Works and Japanese PoWs (the latter still numbering 130 on 15 April) mostly working for ML and RAF units in Java and Sumatra. [168]

No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron takes over RAPWI services, the Japanese aircraft reorganized into a new ML unit

No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron relinquished its eight TB-25s and three Lockheed L12As in January and February 1946 but received 12 refurbished surplus USAAF C-47s in the period of January 1946 up to and including March 1946 (see below). During January 1946 when RAPWI-AIR started the transfer of its activities the unit took over the most important scheduled services flown with Japanese aircraft in Java. This much to the chagrin of Arens who had a number of airworthy Japanese aircraft and lots of Japanese aviation fuel still available. LKol Versteegh had secured political backing and wanted to fly all existing scheduled services as a prelude to the re-establishment of the KNILM. This policy threatened to overburden 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron, however. To ease the pressure on the unit 18 Squadron had to fly a daily service with one TB-25 aircraft between Batavia and Balikpapan, later reduced to twice a week. The latter unit also took over the scheduled flight of “Arens Airlines” with one aircraft every other day to Bali for the transport of food to Bandoeng. Only in September 1946 could these scheduled flights be ended and transferred to 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron. [169]

The above mentioned changes were in part due to the lack of sufficient numbers of serviceable Japanese aircraft. The Japanese transport aircraft, nevertheless, continued flying and, for example, took care of a twice to three times a day service between Kemajoran and Tjililitan with the remaining serviceable planes. [170] The Japanese aircraft were initially maintained by Japanese PoWs supervised by a few NCOs from 18 Squadron. In February 1946 the ML technical depot at Andir then called the RAPWI Technical Service, which on 1 March became No 1 Vliegtuig Reparatie Afdeeling (1 VRA, No 1 Aircraft Repair Depot) of the ML, took over the maintenance of the former Japanese aircraft. This meant a great improvement of the serviceability. With British permission the remaining five Tachikawa Ki54 Soren, four Mitsubishi Ki57 Topsy and two Nakajima L2D Tabby (a Japanese DC-3 version) transport aircraft of the Air Department were reorganized into an ML “transport unit” officially established at Andir on 1 May 1946 but already operational from mid-April. This rather improvised unit was addressed to as the Base

Ops Andir unit or sometimes as the Reconnaissance and Communication unit Andir and belonged to the organization of Andir



Mitsubishi Ki57 Topsy of the Andir Base Ops unit photographed at Andir in October 1946 (authors collection).

airbase. It was, in fact, an operational army support unit and not a transport unit in the traditional sense. Its main tasks were transport and communication as well as (photo) reconnaissance for the B-Division of the NEI/Dutch army forces then deploying in enclaves around four major cities in western and central Java. One Soren was used to support the NEI/Dutch A-Division in Soerabaja from July 1946. The reconnaissance and photo reconnaissance missions for B-Division were flown with both Sorens and Topsy's. The aircraft were maintained by 1 VRA at which unit a group of Japanese maintenance personnel was put to work. The ML and Japanese flying personnel and the Japanese 1 VRA personnel initially still belonged administratively to the RAPWI-Air Department apart from the ML aviation photographers. The latter were borrowed from the Photo School at Andir when necessary. The school also did all photo processing for the unit.

Late September 1946 much of the operational support work was taken over by Piper L-4Js of the recently formed 17 Squadron of the ML. The Base Ops Andir unit became a small communication and transport squadron. It took over a part of the relief flights from 31 Squadron RAF (which disbanded on 30 September, see below) but kept flying as a transport and communication unit for the NEI/Dutch Divisions in Java. During October and November there was a gradual run-down of the number of missions flown with the by now seriously worn-out Japanese aircraft. Fortunately, 1 VRA had received two Lodestars, the LT932 and LT935 which had been returned by the RAAF, in August-September. The C-60s took over much of the communication and transport work. Also a Lockheed L12A was assigned to 1 VRA and used by the Base Ops Andir unit. The remaining tasks were taken over in November by the newly formed 20 (Transport) Squadron of the ML at Tjililitan, although this unit was officially established only on 1 December 1946. The squadron also took over the two Lodestars from 1 VRA. CO of the Base Ops Andir unit was Kap Arens who also remained Head of the RAPWI-Air Department. He was succeeded later by Kap Lukkien. See Appendix 5 for more details on the Base Ops Andir unit and its aircraft. [171]

The C-47s of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron arrived via the three mentioned routes at Kemajoran, were unloaded there and flown to Tjililitan for a maintenance check (25- or 50-hours check) with a 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron detachment. They were then used for two to three days for the former RAPWI-AIR scheduled flights in Java. There were two daily flights, one from Kemajoran via Bandoeng, Semarang and Soerabaja back to Batavia and the other to Soerabaja and via Semarang and Bandoeng back to Batavia. The stop at Djocjakarta used by "Arens Airlines" had already been dropped as Indonesian nationalists would no longer allow RAPWI aircraft. [172] In January 1946 the BPM oil company fortunately started to supply Tjililitan and later also Tandjong Perak airbase at Soerabaja with aviation fuel ending worries about fuel scarcity. [173]

New aircraft and further expansion

During October-November 1945 the NEI Department of Public Works bought a substantial number of surplus USAAF C-47s in the U.S.A. and the Philippines and also a C-117A/DC-3D from Douglas. They were added to the fleet of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron from January 1946 up to and

including October 1946. The 17 aircraft from the Philippines were readied at Clark Field, Manila and ferried to Brisbane by a team of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron led by Maj Wittert van Hoogland and Kap Van Messel. Also two written off aircraft were bought for spares of which one made a final flight to Penfoei, Timor and was taken apart there. The other one was broken up at Clark Field. The spares and components were flown to Archerfield with other C-47s. The 17 aircraft were ferried to Archerfield in November and December 1945. Five of them were selected for cannibalisation and later also broken up for spares. See Appendix 4 for further details on the contract, delivery and individual aircraft bought.

The surplus aircraft and the C-117A/DC-3D from the U.S.A. were overhauled by Canadair. They were ferried via the Atlantic and the United Kingdom to Batavia by American ferry crews hired by the Netherlands Purchasing Commission (NPC) in the U.S.A. There were 12 C-47A freight aircraft and ten C-47As rebuilt into passenger aircraft as the C-117A already was. The first six C-47 freighters arrived in Batavia in April 1946, the final four passenger aircraft in October 1946. With the aircraft also a substantial amount of spare parts bought from Canadair were shipped to Batavia. See Appendix 4 for further details on the contract, delivery and individual aircraft bought.

The 11 passenger-aircraft were to go to a new agency of the Department of Public Works called Netherlands Indies Government Air Transport (NIGAT). This was a semi-military organization to become the new NEI civilian airline in due course as was already proposed in May 1945. Initially all C-47/C-117 aircraft were to be operated by 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron, though. The NIGAT as established in October-November 1945 only was an air transport policy and coordinating office of the department with some executive tasks. In January 1946 the department also leased four surplus USAAF Douglas C-54As, all equipped with chairs. They were stored at Walnut Ridge (Arkansas) in the U.S.A. and were delivered at Burbank (Cal.) after engine inspection in the period of May up to and including July 1946. See Appendix 4 for further details.



DT981, the final freight Dakota from the U.S.A. at Kemajoran. The aircraft is still in its original paint scheme with 981 on the nose and the VH call sign on the tail. (Collection Hans Berfelo).

The KNILM was reactivated to operate the C-54 aircraft in charter for the NIGAT on a proposed new Pacific route Batavia-Los Angeles and a new route Batavia-Amsterdam to be shared with KLM. The latter operated under the title Netherlands Government Air Transport. The passenger C-47s (called "Canadairs") were to be operated on a route via Singapore to Bangkok and a number of routes within the NEI archipelago and from Batavia to Brisbane. Apart from the Bangkok service these routes were also to be flown with freight C-47s. The C-117A was to become a VIP-aircraft to be used for unscheduled flights on behalf of Government officials etc. Demobilised pilots and crew members were to be hired to fly the passenger C-47s and the C-54s although they were to be trained by and initially posted to 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron. The KNILM had become a legal vehicle to make possible a passenger service to the U.S.A. This construction also made it possible to hire demobilising Australian, British and American pilots, flying and ground crew members on a KNILM contract instead of hiring them as civil servants. [174]

No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron had seen a substantial personnel growth during the months following VJ Day. Its strength in January 1946 was approximately 100 flying personnel and 400 ground personnel. The latter consisted of about 100 NEI technical personnel, 270 Australian civilian personnel of the Technical Service (of which 75% trained technicians) and some 30 staff and other general personnel including some Australian civilians. In an effort to improve coordination 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron on 1 February 1946 became a participant of the Vliegtuig Transportgroep (VTG, Aircraft Transport Group) which also included a unit of the Dutch Naval Air Service equipped with C-47s and Consolidated Catalina's. Versteegh, promoted to Kolonel, became CO of the VTG. Former member of the KNILM board of directors LKol A.J. de Bruyn became CO of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron and also acting director KNILM, although he had only recently returned from a Japanese internment camp. [175]

The VTG was an executive agency of the Department of Public Works managed by the NIGAT office and was a coordinating body for the non-military flying only. It coordinated all flying for the AMACAB and the NEI Government but not the support for military units. This resulted in 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron getting two bosses, the C-LSK and the CO-VTG. That proved to be no problem in practise during the first two months, although there was formally no one who decided on the priorities when military operational demands conflicted with AMACAB and other civilian demands received via the Department of Public Works. On the initiative of the CG-KNIL this was speedily corrected early April 1946 when a large NEI/Dutch military force started to deploy to replace British troops, as mentioned already.

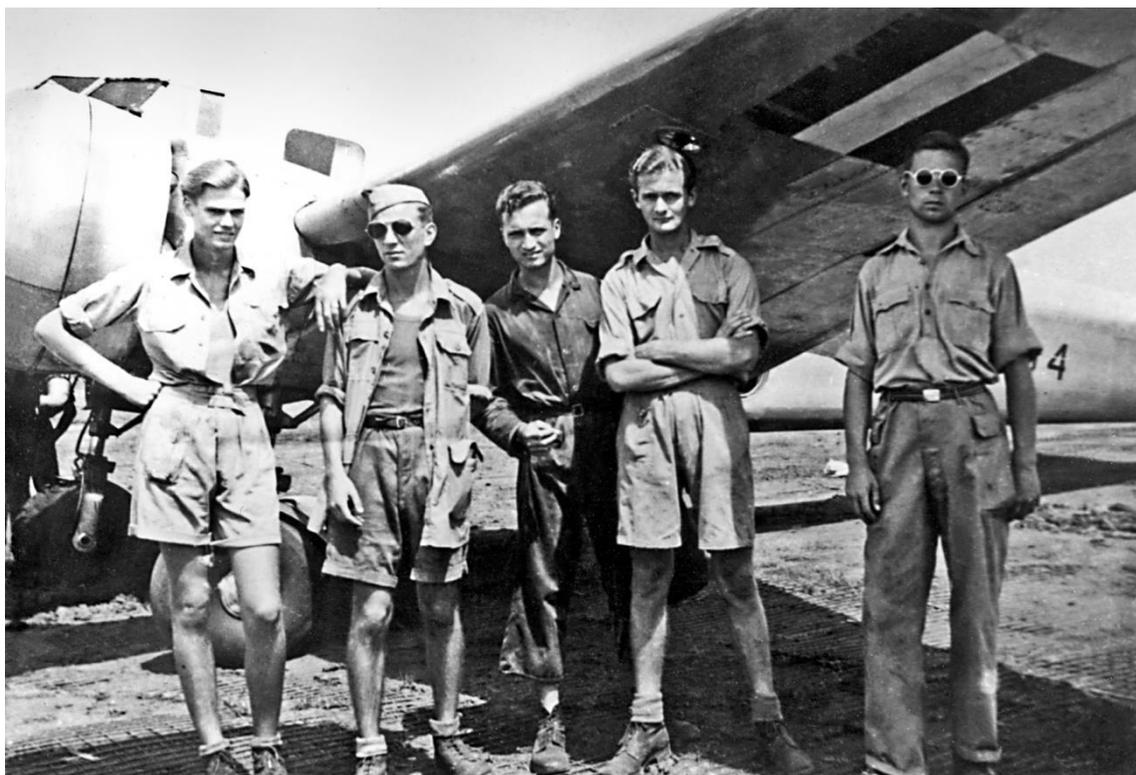
The Directoraat Luchtvervoer (DLV, Directorate of Air Transport) was established in Batavia early April 1946 with as its members the CG-KNIL, the CO Dutch Navy in the NEI, the Director of Public Works (the chairman of the body) and the Director of Economic Affairs of the NEI. They were aided by a staff which was continuously reviewing all air transport demands and decided (advised, formally) on the priorities. The DLV took over coordination tasks from the NIGAT office, the staff of the CO-Commando LSK, the staff of the CO Dutch Naval Air Service in the NEI, as well as of the VTG. The VTG staff remained as a very small staff

office that tried to keep administrative and logistical burdens away from the participating units. Kol Versteegh was made responsible for the planning of the resurrection of an NEI airline and was effectively kept away from all operational affairs. [176]

Despite the ambitions in the direction of a KNILM resurrection 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron still had a substantial number of ML personnel who were not former KNILM in its ranks. The latter personnel actually formed a small minority, although it occupied the key positions in the squadron. Many of the ML personnel and also some personnel seconded to the ML from the Dutch Naval Air Service serving with the squadron at the time did join up as a civilian after their demobilisation, though. The NEI personnel strength of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron had been expanded with KNILM personnel recalled from the West Indies, former PoWs, civilian internees and returning Indonesian employees of the KNILM, Dutch war volunteers of the ML and flying personnel relieved at 18 Squadron and 120 Squadron or just out of training at RAAF schools. Some of the “old hands” who had served with the T.S.M. or the T.A. Brisbane in 1944 were transferred to 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron as well. The expansion slowly continued during the first months of 1946. Even former KLM aviation wireless operator Pool, a Sgt now, returned from the RNN. He had been posted at a NEI Government radio station in Merauke in December 1945. [177]

In March 1946 all 2nd pilots were either former ML PoWs retrained by means of a B-25 course at the P.E.P. or in some cases directly with the squadron on the C-47, or ML pilots who had just received their wings after training with the RAAF. All new single-engine and multi-engine trained pilots were posted at 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron apart from a few necessary to keep the operational ML squadrons on strength. [178] Further expansion with the available personnel was no longer possible but recruitment in Australia started as soon as this point was reached. During May-June 1946 the first civilian Australian pilots and crew members were hired by the Department of Public Works and posted at 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron. [179]

The network of scheduled services within the NEI was also quickly expanded during 1946 and from August 1946 (after the first passenger



Lockheed L12A L2-104 of 18 Squadron photographed at Tjililitan late August 1946-early September 1946. Before the aircraft five (civilian) student flight engineers of 19 (NEI) Squadron, temporarily seconded to 18 Squadron at Tjililitan. On the far left S.C. de Ruyter and second from the right M.M. Bakker. (W. Vredeling via Gerard Casius).

aircraft had been received from Canada) it even became possible, at least on paper, to book a paid flight. [180] During August also a first group of student flight engineers arrived from the Netherlands. [181] The number of C-47s based at Kemajoran had been gradually increased from approximately 1 March and in June 1946 already ten of the then 42 C-47s were stationed in Batavia. The 17 Manila aircraft had been taken on strength at Archerfield in the period of January up to and including March 1946, giving a total strength of 30 C-47s on 1 April. During April six of the surplus aircraft from the U.S.A. arrived at Kemajoran, another six followed in June and seven arrived at Kemajoran in August. As the five cannibalised Manila aircraft and a C-47 that crash landed at Kemajoran (the DT948 on 29 May, see below) were written off in the period of 18 June up to and including 30 June, the total C-47 strength became 43 in August 1946. All C-47s were already based at Kemajoran in that month, although a few were in major overhaul in Australia. [182]

Despite the expansion of the strength the personnel situation due to the large number of additional aircraft taken in and the very intensive flight

schedules remained tight. The serviceability during March 1946 (not counting the five cannibalised Manila aircraft) still was a reasonable 60% with on average two C-47 aircraft in overhaul. In June-July the ground personnel was struggling to keep the serviceability at around 50%. Pilots and crewmembers flew 150-200 hours a month as mentioned above and while in January 1946 1,890 hours had been flown with an average of 14 C-47s, seven TB-25s and three L12As, in July 1946 with then 36 C-47s this had become slightly over 2,500 flying hours. In hours flown per crew this meant only a slight improvement, while the formal maximum still was 100 hours a month. [183]

After the arrival of the final batch of three C-47s and a C-117/DC-3D from Canada in October 19 (NEI) Squadron had a total strength of 47 Dakota's on 1 November 1946. The unit also operated the four NIGAT C-54s of which the first two arrived at Archerfield for flying and ground crew training on 15, respectively 22 July 1946. The four men ferry crews, apart from two civilian crew members, were composed of five active service ML men and one active service RNN aviation wireless operator. The pilots were Maj Van Breemen, Kap Van Messel, Elt G.J. de Haas and Elt Van Rassel, all reserve officer pilots of the ML and formerly KNILM. Aviation wireless operators were SM (RNN) W.F. Lambrechtsen and Mr Houlahan (both former KNILM) and the flight engineers Adj Th. Inkenhaag (a regular NCO of the ML) and Mr Chr. Elleman Jr (formerly KNILM). The final two aircraft were ferried by American ferry crews hired by the NPC and were delivered at Kemajoran. [184]

The surplus USAAF C-54 aircraft had been flown from Walnut Ridge, Arkansas to Burbank, California. A team of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron consisting of ferry crews and technical personnel arrived at Burbank on 5 May 1946 to take over the aircraft. The C-54s were in good condition and had been made serviceable as part of the lease contract but Pacific Air Motors Corporation at Burbank still had to give the engines an inspection when the team arrived. The aircraft gradually became flight ready and were taken over in the period of May up to and including July 1946. They received NEI national markings and ML serials DT994 up to and including DT997. The majority of the NEI personnel followed a C-54 conversion course with the training centre of Douglas at Santa Monica in this period. The flying instruction started in the final week of May on the

DT994. After some local flying the first two aircraft were used for long range flying training in the U.S.A. The DT994 and DT995, from 5 August, subsequently flew in Australia for the first C-54 conversion course for pilots and flight engineers organized by 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron.

The majority of the students still were actively serving ML personnel and not yet demobilised. C-54 flying training was done in Brisbane but from Amberley and not from Archerfield. The aircraft were also given serials by the NIGAT (NI540-NI543 incl.) as the lease contract with the



The Skymaster DT995 photographed at Amberley, Brisbane in August 1946 when in use for the first C-54 conversion course of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron (collection Hans Berfelo).

Reconstruction Finance Corporation (a U.S. Government agency, see Appendix 4) prohibited military use of the aircraft. These serials were never carried on the aircraft, however. The Skymasters were first listed as operated by the KNILM in October 1946 when based at Kemajoran. The four aircraft also received civilian PK registrations and a NIGAT paint scheme during that month. Contrary to the crews, the C-54s were (officially) never on the strength of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron. [185]

No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron transferred to the NEI and slowly developing into a new airline

No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron formed a small detachment of ground personnel at Tjililitan in October 1945 already to service and perform maintenance checks on its C-47s and TB-25s flying on Kemajoran from Archerfield. Not a popular posting at the time as the conditions were still war-like with regular attacks by Japanese armed Indonesian nationalist troops. The detachment was expanded into a temporary maintenance depot in April 1946 to be able to give both the new C-47s arriving from Canada (after a flight of 100 hours in total) and the present C-47s operating on NEI archipelago flights (often gathering 100 hours in a matter of days) a 100-hours inspection. Fortunately, safety conditions at Tjililitan had greatly improved. Spare parts were no longer a problem as the new C-47s also brought in spares from Canada, as mentioned. [186]

In August 1946 most of the remaining NEI personnel and the equipment at Archerfield were transferred to Kemajoran. The personnel strength was further enlarged there with some additional American and Australian pilots and crewmembers. The discharge of experienced Australian civilian technical personnel at Archerfield had been delayed as long as possible to be able to replace this personnel with former KNILM PoWs and civilian internees and returning Indonesian KNILM personnel. In August there were approximately 300 Australian and also 30 American civilians employed by the NEI War Office and the Department of Public Works and working with the Technical Service of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron. The about 100 NEI technicians including a few civilians with a War Office contract were almost all transferred to Kemajoran. Only some 15 remained at Archerfield to supervise the Australians and Americans and fly as a crewmember on test and training flights. At Kemajoran initially only a few British and American civilians were employed. Quite a few of the Australian and American technicians from Archerfield did sign up, though, and followed the squadron to Batavia on a KNILM contract. [187]

The arrival of the C-47s and C-54s from Canada and the U.S.A. and the transfer of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron to Batavia did not go unnoticed. No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron came under British operational command on arrival and the RAF immediately made up plans to withdraw 31 Squadron. This unit was to be relieved by 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron in the view of the RAF. The RAF transport squadron was disbanded at Kemajoran on 30 September 1946, as already mentioned. Apart from a limited number of

support flights for British Army units that were cut off by Indonesian nationalist troops it had almost exclusively carried out relief flights and flights for the evacuation of PoWs and civilian internees for RAPWI and later AMACAB. In the one year and six days it had operated from Kemajoran it carried out 11,000 sorties on which 127,800 passengers and 26,000 tons of freight were transported. Two of its C-47s were lost. [188]

The ML had to take action immediately to fill the gap in the one week notice it had been given. This was not all that easy. No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron could absorb a part of 31 Squadrons flight schedule but was already heavily tasked. The Base Ops Andir unit could take over a limited part only as it still had to fulfil the communication and transport tasks for the NEI/Dutch Army Divisions in Java. Fortunately its capacity could be expanded somewhat with two Lodestars and a Lockheed L12A from 1 VRA. The Japanese aircraft were approaching the end of their useful lives, though. A new ML transport squadron with TB-25s was planned but many TB-25s were in need of overhaul or already in overhaul and it took a while before these aircraft were available and additional aircraft had been converted into TB-25s. Not until 1 December 1946 was it possible to establish 20 Squadron of the ML at Tjililitan, although a part of the unit started flying in November already with the two 1 VRA Lodestars and a few TB-25s just delivered by 1 VRA. The new squadron was equipped with four C-47s transferred by 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron, the two Lodestars from 1 VRA and 11 TB-25 from the P.E.P., in part B-25s converted by 1 VRA. The P.E.P. had been transferred in phases from Bundaberg to Biak in the period of April-September 1946 but was dissolved on 1 November 1946. Only the B-25 flying training was left at Biak as part of the new Centrale Vliegschool (Central Flying School). No 18 Squadron had to fill the remaining capacity gap until the new 20 Squadron was fully operational. [189]

The pre-war workshops of the KNILM at Kemajoran for the most part had to be rebuilt. The buildings and hangars that were still usable were occupied by the RAF and the tools and the machine shop inventory bought from U.S. surplus stocks in Biak had to be installed in tents. The rebuilding and re-equipment was organized by the Department of Public Works and its NIGAT office. The maintenance depot at Tjililitan remained

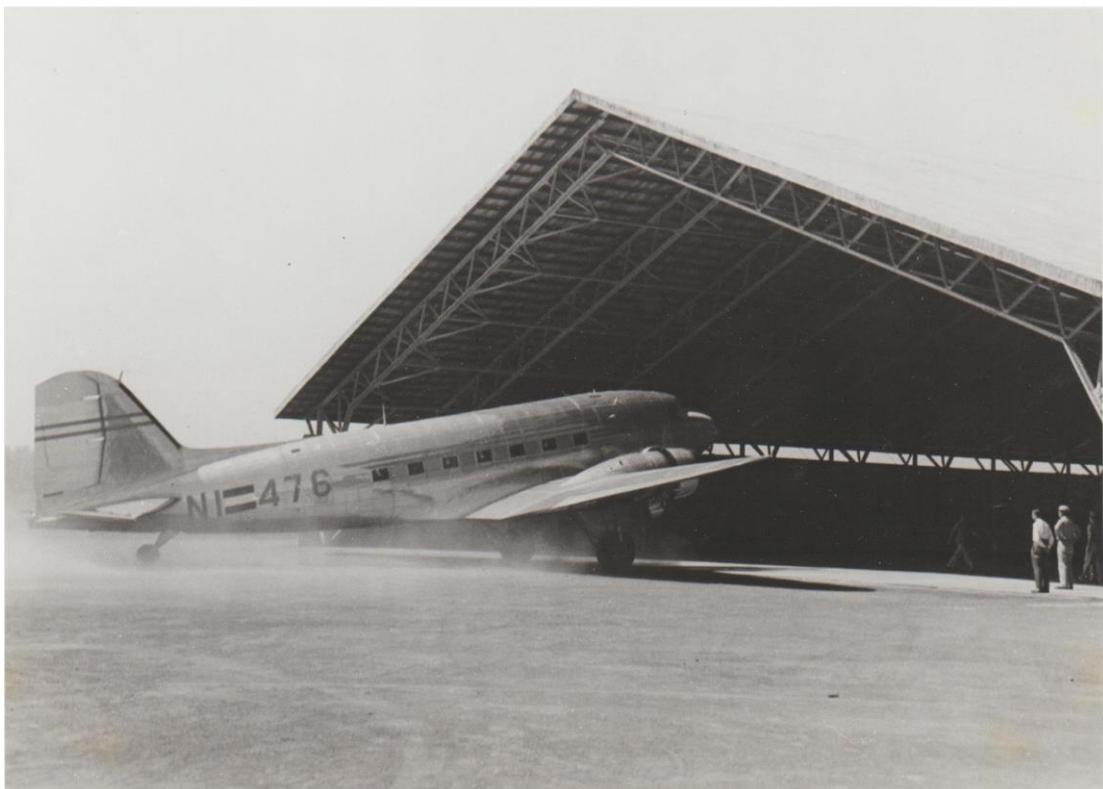
operational and strengthened with some additional personnel for the time being performed all inspections apart from the major overhauls after every 300 flying hours. The latter were still done by ANA in Australia but at Archerfield. The RAAF ended engine overhaul work shortly after VJ Day and this too had been put into a new post-war contract with ANA and was done at Mascot, Sydney. [190]



Dakota DT947 VHREA at Kemajoran c. August 1946 (collection Hans Berfelo).

The RAF largely left Kemajoran in November 1946 but the build-up of an adequate capacity for airframe as well as engine overhauls and major repairs, nevertheless, went painfully slow as extensive repairs to the infrastructure were necessary and a complete engine repair shop bought from U.S. surplus stocks in Dutch New Guinea had to be installed. No 19 Squadron was removed from the RAAF order of battle on 1 January 1947 but kept a detachment at Archerfield and in Brisbane. CO of the Detachment Brisbane of 19 Squadron at the time was Maj Van Breemen. Major inspections of the C-47s still had to be done by ANA in Brisbane and the engines had to be shipped to Sydney for overhaul. Flight training on the C-47 was done from Archerfield as was test flying after overhauls and engine changes. C-54 flight training remained at Amberley. All of these activities were transferred to Kemajoran only in April-May 1947 together with the last groups of personnel. [191]

Per 1 November 1946 the squadron flew twice a week via Singapore to Bangkok and once every two weeks via Balikpapan and Pelawan to Manila with "Canadairs". Batavia-Brisbane via the three routes described above was now flown five times a week and in part with "Canadairs". The first C-54 (long range) trial flights, one to Amsterdam and one to Los Angeles, were made in November with crews in part still composed of active duty ML personnel, although all were dressed in "KNILM uniform". The flight crews wore American summer uniforms which were the standard with the ML but without rank shoulder pads. These were put back on after landing by the active service personnel. Even on the first regular Los Angeles flight that took off from Kemajoran on 6 December part of the flight crew was active duty ML personnel. Captain Van Messel was a reserve officer pilot with the ML but still on active duty. One of the two wireless operators, SM Timmermans, was one of several regular NCOs who filled vacancies with the KNILM on the "Canadairs" and the C-54s. [192]



"Canadair" NI-476 in the semi-airline paint scheme with blue striping (introduced in August 1946) photographed late 1946 or early 1947 at Biak (authors collection).

By then preparations for a transformation of 19 Squadron into a newly to be established KLM Interinsular Company were already ongoing. The

KNILM was to be dissolved. The VTG already had become an empty shell in October and was disbanded in November 1946. Strictly military work was casted off to the new 20 Squadron of the ML. This squadron also took over from the Base Ops Andir unit which was also disbanded in November. [193]

In the period of 1 January 1946 to 1 November 1946 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron made (with C-47s, TB-25s and L12As) approximately 43,000 flying hours, transported 110,000 passengers and 6,500,000 kg of freight and mail. [194] Surprisingly only one major accident occurred until 1 November 1946. On 29 May Dakota DT948 ran off the Kemajoran runway. It had major damage to the undercarriage and needed new propellers but was reparable. As the workshops at Kemajoran were still under repair and had to be re-equipped the crash resulted in the aircraft being cannibalised and it was written off in June 1946. [195]

In November 1946 No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron had a flying echelon of 133 men, including 47 Australian and 13 American civilians. The ground echelon strength at that time is unknown but was between 600 and 700 men including NEI and Dutch as well as Australian, British and American civilians. A collection of personnel consisting of ML personnel, some RNN personnel, civilians with a NEI War Office contract, civilians with a NEI Department of Public Works contract, civilians with a KNILM contract and civilian day labourers. [196] The unit remained a ML squadron and a sizable part of the flying echelon as well as a minor part of the ground personnel remained active duty ML personnel for the time being. Yet, it had been solidly put on the road to airline status.

Conclusions

When the ML was planning its part of the RNMFS training programmes in 1942 it used a formation of two medium-bomber squadrons and one fighter squadron to be formed as part of the RAAF as a planning benchmark. To be able to give non-operational aircrew useful flying postings the ML also planned its own NEI air transport capacity for which six Lockheed C-60A Lodestars and eight Douglas C-47A Dakota's were ordered. This would allow air transport support to the ML operational squadrons as well as operational KNIL Infantry units.

However, the first NEI air transport unit established in Australia on 16 January 1943 at Archerfield, Brisbane was the T.A. Brisbane, a Flight consisting of ML crews flying USAAF (DAT assigned) C-47 aircraft for the U.S. Fifth Air Force. It was most appreciated by the Fifth Air Force and the DAT as the crews (initially all formerly KNILM/KLM) were very experienced. They flew the dangerous route between Brisbane and Port Moresby in New Guinea and made flights to other destinations in New Guinea without a single mishap. When the USAAF air transport squadrons in Australia were transferred to New Guinea the unit was manned up and equipped with ML aircraft to become an independent transport squadron, No 2 N.E.I.T.S., on 1 September 1944. This to be able to cope with the expected and indeed realised explosive growth of necessary air transport for so-called “national tasks”, in particular support to the NICA.

The second air transport unit formed on 1 February 1944 at Laverton, Melbourne was the T.S.M. which became 1 N.E.I.T.S. on 1 September 1944 and was transferred to Archerfield on 1 October 1944. This unit operated ML aircraft from the start and supported the operational ML squadrons in the RAAF, KNIL units as well as detachments and parties of the NICA and NEFIS in Dutch New Guinea and elsewhere in the NEI archipelago and the NEI Headquarters in Melbourne and later also in Brisbane. The efforts of this unit were highly appreciated by the units and detachments it supported but as it was in part responsible for “national tasks” and in part for front line support it was not recognised as an operational 1st line troop carrier squadron by GHQ SWPA. This resulted in shortages of spare parts and delays with aircraft inspections and overhauls which were to a large part contracted out to ANA via the Australian Department of Aircraft Production. The latter was necessary due to a lack of ML ground personnel and the inability of the RAAF to supply more personnel than those necessary for 18 Squadron N.E.I., 120 Squadron N.E.I. and the N.E.I. Aircraft and Personnel Pool, later called Personnel and Equipment Pool.

Both air transport units were used to give rest postings to relieved operational crews and to post pilots and crew members awaiting their first operational tour. Each had a small core of pilots and crew members too old or otherwise unsuited for operational postings and which came in

part from the KNILM and KLM. This proved to be an efficient use of the available ML flying personnel.

Following the merger of 1 N.E.I.T.S. and 2 N.E.I.T.S. on 7 November 1944, a relatively large 24 aircraft strong transport squadron called 1 N.E.I.T.S. came into being at Archerfield, Brisbane with a flying crew much larger than usual as had already become standard in the original 1 N.E.I.T.S. This was a direct consequence of the disbandment of 119 Squadron N.E.I. RAAF (one of the two planned medium-bomber squadrons) but proved rather efficient due to the permanent absence of a number of pilots and crew members for ferry assignments, various courses with the RAAF and the N.E.I.-P.E.P. and temporary postings, as well as mandatory rest periods after the frequent flights of very long duration. The latter to keep the crews under the safety limit of 100 flying hours a month. The unit also had a uniquely composed ground echelon mainly consisting of Australian civilian personnel. Most aircraft inspections and overhauls remained outsourced to ANA via the Department of Aircraft Production due to the small size of the technical department of the ground echelon.

T.S.M. and 1 N.E.I.T.S. when based in Melbourne had a ground crew largely consisting of RAAF personnel and some Australian civilians. When based in Brisbane the larger part of the ground crew consisted of Australian civilians only, not an ideal situation for a military air transport unit. This organization, nevertheless, soon proved itself as an efficient one although it prevented the transfer of the unit or a larger part of it to Biak in Dutch New Guinea. Also maintenance of the C-47 aircraft of 1 N.E.I.T.S. remained somewhat troublesome due to delays at ANA. The ML tried to solve this by asking the RAAF to recognise 1 N.E.I.T.S. as a RAAF Squadron resulting in the unit becoming No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron per 15 August 1945.

After VJ Day the strength of the squadron was quickly expanded, both with personnel and aircraft, as an all out effort was necessary for the rescue of PoWs and civilian internees in the NEI of whom many were on the brink of starvation. A total of 40 Dakota's were bought, 39 from U.S. surplus stocks in the U.S.A. and in the Philippines plus one DC-3D from Douglas. Four surplus C-54s were leased in the U.S.A. Shortages of spares for the C-47s were first solved by taking apart a total of seven of

the Philippines aircraft. Spares bought from Canadair were then flown to Batavia in refurbished C-47s. Additional Australian and some American civilian personnel were hired, groups of war volunteers from the Netherlands and the first liberated former PoWs and civilian internees arrived but the air transport demand could only be met with extraordinary amounts of flying time for the crews and long hours for the overburdened technical personnel on the ground.

To ease the demand on 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron the N.E.I.-P.E.P. stationed a TB-25 detachment at Kemajoran, Batavia in October 1945 to support the RAPWI Air Department organization. The crews and aircraft of this detachment were gradually transferred to 18 Squadron and the detachment was active until approximately 1 April 1946. A new improvised ML "transport unit" the Base Ops Andir unit, sometimes called Reconnaissance and Communication unit, equipped with Japanese aircraft became operational mid-April. It became responsible for the operational support of the NEI/Dutch army force deploying in Java at the time and was formally established on 1 May 1946 at Andir, Bandoeng. The unit became a communication and transport unit late September 1946 after Piper L-4Js of 17 Squadron of the ML had taken over the (photo) reconnaissance tasks.

The larger part of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron was transferred from Archerfield to Batavia in August 1946 but a detachment at Tjililitan had to continue doing all inspections apart from 300-hours major overhauls. The major overhauls still had to be done with ANA but at Archerfield awaiting repair and re-equipment of the former KNILM facilities at Kemajoran. In November 1946 the strictly military work was casted of to the forming 20 Squadron of the ML which also took over from the Base Ops Andir unit. No 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron fully became a semi-military airline with a mixed civilian-military personnel complement including a still sizable ML component. It remained a part of the ML for the time being but with a strong influence of the NEI Department of Public Works on its operations.

Just like its predecessors 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron was an efficient organizational solution of problems in the fields of manning, equipment and aircraft maintenance. Despite the odds the T.A. Brisbane/2 N.E.I.T.S, T.S.M./1 N.E.I.T.S. and 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron had made the

best of difficult circumstances and put up an impressive output most appreciated by those supported.

Appendices

(all dates day, month, (last two digits of) year or month, (last two digits of) year; xxxx-xxxx = xxxx up to and including xxxx; [... ..] = additional information on postings elsewhere, repairs and overhauls etc.)

Appendix 1

DAT Douglas C-47s used by T.A. Brisbane, period January 1943-August 1944 (As far as is known, ac were not permanently attached to the T.A. but assigned by 39th TCS and from 290943 by 21st TCS for daily operations. Listed are DAT call sign, USAAF Fiscal Year serial, known period(s) of regular use by T.A. Brisbane).

VHCGA, 42-23418, c. 0444-0844

VHCGB, 41-18645, 1143-0844.

VHCGC, 42-23485, 0144-0844.

VHCGD (1), 42-23486, 0144-c. 0744.

VHCGD (2), 43-15432, c. 0744-0844.

VHCGE, 42-23491, 0144-0844.

VHCGF, 42-23488, 0143-09.43; c. 0444-0644.

VHCGG, 41-18671, 1143-c. 0144.

VHCGH, 42-23581, 0143-1143.

VHCGI, 42-23590, 0143-0943; c. 0444-0744.

VHCGJ, 42-23583, 1143-0744.

VHCGK, 42-23589, 0143-0943; c. 0444-0744.

VHCGL (1), 42-23584, 0143-0943.

VHCGL (2), 42-23953, c. 0444-0644.

VHCGN, 42-23586, 0143-0943; c. 0444-0644.

VHCGO, 42-23587, 0143-0943; c. 0444-0744.

VHCGP, 42-23588, c. 0444-0844.

VHCGQ, 42-23582, c. 0444-0744.

VHCGR, 42-23651, 0544-0744.

VHCGS, 42-23653, 0544-0744.

VHCGU, 42-23656, c. 0444-0744.

VHCGV, 42-23660, 0544-0744.

VHCGW, 42-23662, c. 0444-0744.

VHCGX, 42-23659, 0444-0744.

VHCGZ, 42-92824, 0744-0844.

Sources: logbook extracts received from T.G.J. van der Schroeffer, logbook V.N. Jansen, information on aircraft flown received from G. van Messel; data on DAT and 317 TCG/374 TCG Dakota's received from Gordon Birkett (his e-mail to author of 8 March 2018).

North American TB-25s, Lockheed C-60As and the Lockheed L12A used by 2 N.E.I.T.S.

(Listed are ML serial, USAAF FY serial, date issued or received, VH call sign, date transferred, [...] = additional details on previous use, inspections, later use).

TB-25s

N5-128 41-12935 issued 2 NEITS 280944 ex PEP (**VHRDA**), 071144 transferred to PEP.

N5-129 41-12936 issued 2 NEITS 280944 ex PEP (**VHRDB**), 071144 transferred to PEP.

N5-134 41-12885 issued 2 NEITS 280944 ex PEP (**VHRDC**), 071144 transferred to PEP.

N5-142 41-29716 issued 2 NEITS 280944 ex PEP (**VHRDD**), 071144 transferred to PEP.

N5-143 41-29722 issued 2 NEITS 280944 ex PEP (**VHRDE**), c. 261044 to PEP for maintenance; [041144 to Essendon (ANA) ex PEP for maintenance; 211144 test flown at Essendon after inspection and double engine change; 0145 test flight PEP].

N5-180 42-87416 [c. 290944 18 Sq NEI, Potshot to PEP, Canberra]; received 2 NEITS 261044 ex PEP (probably **VHRDX**), based at Essendon, Melbourne (support NEI Government); 071144 transferred to 1 NEITS, remained on charge with 1 NEITS (Essendon).

C-60As

LT933 43-16448 received 2 NEITS 270944 ex 37 Sq RAAF (**VHRDQ**), 071144 transferred to 1 NEITS, remained on charge with 1 NEITS.

LT934 43-16443 received 2 NEITS 270944 ex 37 Sq RAAF (**VHRDR**), 071144 transferred to 1 NEITS, remained on charge with 1 NEITS.

LT936 43-16461 received 2 NEITS 270944 ex 37 Sq RAAF (**VHRDU**); 1044 to ANA, Essendon for repairs; 211044 taken over at ANA, Essendon after repairs and repair of oil pressure problem that occurred during acceptance test flight; 071144 transferred to 1 NEITS, remained on charge with 1 NEITS.

L12A

L2-103 c/n 1311 (ex L2-43) [071044 received at Essendon from PEP Canberra, used by the PEP test pilot at Essendon for twin-engine flying instruction 111044-171044, then to ANA for inspection]; 261044 acceptance test flight at Essendon ex ANA and issued 2 NEITS; 2 NEITS based Essendon, Melbourne (support NEI Government) 261044-071144 (**VHRDE**); 071144 transferred to 1 NEITS, remained on charge with 1 NEITS (Essendon).

Sources: various logbooks; various letters and notes of Hoofdkwartier KNIL/DvO (Afdeeling C) concerning aircraft assignments; (aircraft) record cards RAAF of NEI B-25s (via Historical Section RAAF) and C-60s (via Gordon Birkett); interviews author with G. van Messel, G. Cooke and A.J. van der Heiden.

Appendix 2

Douglas C-47/A/Bs, Lockheed C-60As, North American TB-25C/Ds and Lockheed L12As of T.S.M. ,1 N.E.I.T.S. and 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron

0244-1245 (As far as is known; it is noted that TB-25s that went to ANA, Essendon for maintenance were administratively assigned P.E.P. Listed are ML serial, USAAF FY serial, VH call sign, date assigned, issued or received, date transferred, [...] = additional details on previous use, maintenance and later use).

C-60As

LT931 42-56060 [delivered ex factory 0843; delivered RNMFS 260843]; accepted ML Brisbane 050943; [initially assigned 18 Squadron NEI, received 011043; reassigned 119 Squadron NEI, received 091043; 101243 to Pool Squadron]; assigned TSM ex Pool Squadron 010244 (per 0544 **VHRDA**); 180744 on loan to RAAF ex TSM; [received PEP ex 6 CU 110246, 120346 to CMU for fuel tanks repair, repairs not carried out and ac kept in storage for transfer to the FLC].

LT933 43-16448 [delivered ex factory 1143]; accepted ML Brisbane 111143; assigned TSM ex Pool Squadron 010244; taken off flying 0344, ac in need of overhaul; 140444 transferred to 37 Squadron RAAF for ferrying to ANA at Parafield for overhaul; [ac used on loan by 37 Squadron after overhaul]; received from 2 NEITS 071144 (**VHRDQ**); 050645 on loan to RAAF ex 1 NEITS; [200945 to 7 AD for repairs; issued PEP ex Tocumwal 180746].

LT934 43-16443 [delivered ex factory 1043, delivered RNMFS, Jackson 041043; left Sacramento for Australia with RNMFS crew 161243]; arrived Brisbane and accepted ML 241243; assigned TSM ex Pool Squadron 010244; taken off flying 0344, ac in need of overhaul; 140444 transferred to 37 Squadron RAAF for ferrying of ac to ANA at Parafield for overhaul; [ac used on loan by 37 Squadron after overhaul]; received from 2 NEITS 071144 (**VHRDR**); 050645 on loan to RAAF ex 1 NEITS; [090845 to 7 AD for inspection and repairs; not carried out and ac in storage at Tocumwal for transfer to the FLC].

LT936 43-16461 [delivered ex factory 1143]; accepted ML Brisbane 040144; assigned TSM ex Pool Squadron 010244 (per 0544 **VHRDB**);

180744 on loan to RAAF ex TSM; received from 2 NEITS 071144 (**VHRDU**), 0145 or early 0245 severely damaged by passing cyclone, 190245 written off.

C-47As

DT937 42-92256 [accepted at factory and to mod. center 041143; 111243 delivered RNMFS, Jackson; 171244 rep. with ATC Ferry Group, Long Beach for the ferry to Australia; arrived Brisbane 221243]; accepted ML Brisbane 221243; assigned TSM ex Pool Squadron 010244 (**VHRDG** per 0544); still on strength 011146.

DT938 42-92198 [accepted at factory and to mod. center 111043; 121143 delivered RNMFS, Jackson; 060144 from Jackson to San Francisco with NEI crew, 0144 with another NEI crew to Australia]; accepted ML Melbourne 050244; assigned TSM c. 100244 (**VHRDH** per 0544); still on strength 011146.

DT939 42-92474 [accepted at factory and to mod. center 240144; 010244 delivered RNMFS, Jackson; 150244 departed Jackson for Australia with NEI crew]; accepted ML Melbourne 160344 (**VHRDI** per 0544); still on strength 011146.

DT940 42-92311 [accepted at factory and to mod. center 021243; 311243 delivered RNMFS, Jackson; 070244 departed Jackson for San Francisco, ac left for Australia with NEI crew after arrival of a group of NEI B-25s to be ferried]; accepted ML Melbourne 240344 (**VHRDJ** per 0544); still on strength 011146.

DT941 42-93015 [accepted at mod. center 0344; departed to Australia 150444]; accepted ML Brisbane 230444 (**VHRDK** per 0544); 060944 missing near Cairns on a flight from Merauke to Townsville with 20 crew and passengers.

DT942 42-108903 [accepted at mod. center 030344; delivered uncamouflaged; departed Long Beach 170444]; accepted ML Brisbane 250444 (**VHRDL** per 0544); still on strength 011146. Ac was the only C-47 that was Dutch owned (a gift from Dutch companies and citizens).

DT943 42-93433 [accepted at mod. center 170544; delivered uncamouflaged, departed Long Beach 140644]; accepted ML Brisbane 200644 (**VHRDM**); still on strength 011146.

DT944 42-93434 [accepted at mod. center 180544, arrived with Dutch pilot Kap T.H. Leegstra of NPC; departed to Australia 200644 with NEI ferry crew]; accepted ML Melbourne 280644 (**VHRDN**); still on strength 011146.

C-47Bs

DT945 44-76359 [departed via SAD 260245]; accepted ML Brisbane 080345 (**VHRDY**); still on strength 011146.

DT946 44-76360 [departed via SAD 060345]; accepted ML Brisbane 120345 (**VHRDZ**); still on strength 011146.

DT947 44-76796 [departed via SAD 160545]; accepted ML Brisbane 240545 (**VHREA**); still on strength 011146.

DT948 44-76798 [departed continental USA 150545]; accepted ML Brisbane 150645 (**VHREB**); landing accident Kemajoran 290546 (major damage); w.o. period 180646-300646 (reduced to spares).

DT949 44-77143 [departed continental USA 070745]; accepted ML Brisbane 140745 (**VHREC**); still on strength 011146.

DT950 44-77145 [departed continental USA 070745]; accepted ML Brisbane 160745 (**VHRED**); still on strength 011146.

Borrowed DAT C-47s/C-47A

VHCFT 41-38628 C-47-DL; DAT assigned USAAF aircraft; 100444-130444 borrowed from 36 Squadron RAAF for the transfer of 120 Squadron NEI from Canberra to Merauke.

VHCHB 41-18649 C-47-DL; DAT assigned USAAF aircraft; 100444-130444 borrowed from 36 Squadron RAAF for the transfer of 120 Squadron NEI from Canberra to Merauke.

VHCHL 42-23960 C-47A-35-DL; DAT assigned USAAF aircraft; 100444-130444 borrowed from 36 Squadron RAAF for the transfer of 120 Squadron NEI from Canberra to Merauke.

TB-25s

N5-128 41-12935 [received PEP ex 2 NEITS 071144 (**VHRDA**)]; issued 1 NEITS 090245 (**VHRDX**); 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Squadron 0245-0745; 0745 to PEP [0745 to 18 Sq NEI ex PEP; 0845 to PEP ex 18 Sq NEI].

N5-129 41-12936 100344-280344 temporary assigned TSM from Pool Sq for the Potshot emergency (support 120 Squadron NEI) and again 100444-130444 for the transfer of 120 Squadron NEI from Canberra to Merauke; 250444 issued TSM ex PEP (per 0544 **VHRDC**); c. 010744 to PEP for maintenance; [received PEP ex 2 NEITS 071144 **VHRDB**]; issued 1 NEITS ex PEP c. 0745; 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Squadron 0745-0945 (**VHRDC**); 030945 to PEP ex 19 (NEI) Sq (for maintenance).

N5-134 41-12885 assigned TSM ex Pool Sq 010244; 0444 to PEP ex TSM; [071144 received PEP ex 2 NEITS **VHRDC**; 200745 assigned Technical School PEP; 050845 and 060845 test flights; 0845 trainer PEP; 1245 18 Sq NEI Balikpapan].

N5-138 41-12934 0544 to TSM ex PEP (**VHRDE**); 100744 received PEP ex TSM (for maintenance); 0844 to TSM ex PEP (probably **VHRDS**); TSM/1 NEITS 0844-1244; to PEP ex 1 NEITS 0145 or 0245; [0845 trainer PEP].

N5-142 41-29716 issued TSM ex Pool Sq 140244 (after maintenance); 0344 to Pool Sq; [received 3 AD RAAF at Amberley 310344 for 1,000 hrs overhaul; 110844 issued PEP ex 3 AD]; **VHRDD** call sign assigned 0544 when with 3 AD; [071144 to PEP ex 2 NEITS (**VHRDD**); test flight PEP 0145]; 0145 or 0245 to 1 NEITS ex PEP (**VHRDD**); c. 0545 to PEP ex 1 NEITS; [0845 trainer PEP]; 0845 issued 1 NEITS ex PEP (**VHRDD**); 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Sq 0845-1245; 0146 or 0246 to PEP ex 19 (NEI) Sq; [0346-0446 trainer PEP].

N5-143 41-29722 issued TSM ex Pool Sq 010544 (per 0544 **VHRDF**), TSM 0544-0644; c. 0744 to PEP ex TSM for maintenance; [c. 261044 to PEP ex 2 NEITS (**VHRDE**), 041144 to ANA, Essendon ex PEP; 281144 test flown Essendon after inspection and double engine change; test flight PEP 0145]; 0145 or 0245 to 1 NEITS ex PEP (**VHRDF**); 1 NEITS 0245-0745, but reported u/s at Archerfield 010845; 0745 transferred to

PEP and taken off charge 0845; written off 060945 due to its technical state; 070945 to be reduced to spares.

N5-148 42-32338 issued 1 NEITS ex PEP 0845; 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Squadron 0845-c. 0146; c. 0146 to PEP; [to 18 Sq Detachment Kemajoran probably 0146 or 0246].

N5-151 42-32485 received TSM ex PEP c. 0744; received PEP ex 1 NEITS 190944; c. 1044 to 1 NEITS ex PEP (probably **VHRDV**); 0145 or 0245 to PEP ex 1 NEITS; [18 Sq NEI 0945-0146].

N5-154 41-30584 received TSM 0644 (**VHRDD**); to PEP ex 1 NEITS c. 0944 (for maintenance); probably 1 NEITS 1044-1244 (probably **VHRDW**); 210145 to 1 NEITS ex PEP (probably **VHRDW**); 040645 received PEP; [0845-1045 trainer PEP].

N5-158 41-30589 received TSM ex PEP 0444; emergency landing Dandenong 030544; to PEP for repairs; reissued TSM c. 0744 (**VHRDF**); TSM/1 NEITS 0844-1244; 211244 delivered to ANA, Essendon ex 1 NEITS; [06.45 PEP]; issued 1 NEITS 0745 (**VHRDF**); 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Squadron 0745-1245; c. 0146 to PEP.

N5-164 42-87305 issued 1 NEITS ex PEP c. 0645; 1 NEITS 0645-1245; 0146 or 0246 to PEP.

N5-166 42-87398 issued 1 NEITS ex PEP 0845; 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Squadron 0845-1245; 0146 or 0246 to PEP.

N5-180 42-87416 071144 transferred to 1 NEITS ex 2 NEITS (probably **VHRDX**), based at Essendon (support NEI Government); 0145-0245 to PEP ex 1 NEITS; [ac was already written off before 020845; possibly damaged by a cyclone 0145 or early 0245 and written off, see LT936; ac was replaced by N5-128 which was issued 090245].

N5-188 42-87260 [0445 from 18 Squadron NEI to PEP; 0645 still fully armed operational trainer PEP]; issued 1 NEITS ex PEP 0845; 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Squadron 0845-0146; 0146 to PEP; [0146 to 18 Squadron].

N5-208 43-3833 declared unfit for operations after arrival at the PEP and 0744 assigned TSM; however, 0944 declared unfit for any flying operations due to adverse flying characteristics and taken out of service

(probably not actually used on transport sorties by TSM); [to 1 AD RAAF for further inquiries into the causes and if possible repair; acceptance test flights Essendon after repairs at ANA 200245 and 240245 and delivered PEP 0245]; issued 1 NEITS ex PEP probably 0945; 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Squadron 0945-1245; 0146 or 0246 to PEP; [0246-0446 trainer PEP].

N5-209 43-3835 [0645 from 18 Squadron NEI to PEP]; issued 1 NEITS ex PEP 0845; 1 NEITS/19 (NEI) Squadron 0845-1245; 0146 or 0246 to PEP; [0246-0446 trainer PEP].

L12As

L2-100 c/n 1308 ex L2-40 RNMFS; assigned TSM ex Pool Sq 0244; **VHRDO** per 0544; 0644 seconded 120 Sq NEI Merauke ex TSM; [0744 120 Sq NEI, 1144-1244 PEP but based at Melbourne from at least 101144 and until at least 091244]; 131244 delivered 1 NEITS Brisbane ex PEP (**VHRDO**); 1 NEITS 1244-0245, 160245 from Brisbane to Melbourne, based Melbourne 160245-c. 0345; c. 0345 to PEP ex 1 NEITS; [0445 PEP; 0845 PEP; 120 Sq NEI 1245-0446].

L2-101 c/n 1305 ex L2-37 RNMFS; assigned TSM ex Pool Sq 0244; 280444 seconded 120 Sq NEI Merauke ex TSM; call sign **VHRDP** assigned 0544; [0644 to PEP ex 120 Sq NEI; 120 Sq NEI 1044; 191044 landing accident Merauke, repaired and transferred to PEP; PEP 1044-1144, based at Melbourne from at least 301044 until at least 041144 **VHRDP**]; 1 NEITS c. 101144-1244; based Melbourne late 0145-early 0245, probably still 1 NEITS (**VHRDP**); 0245 to 120 Sq NEI ex PEP; [120 Sq NEI 0245-0645, 0845-0945; PEP 1245].

L2-102 c/n 1307 ex L2-39 RNMFS; assigned TSM ex Pool Sq 0244; **VHRDQ** per 0544; TSM until at least 0744; [1144 seconded 120 Sq NEI ex PEP; 0245 to PEP ex 120 Sq NEI; 0645-0745 120 Sq NEI; PEP 0845-0945]; 19 (NEI) Sq 1045-1145.

L2-103 c/n 1311 ex L2-43 RNMFS; assigned TSM ex Pool Sq 0244; **VHRDR** per 0544; c. 0844 to PEP ex TSM; received from 2 NEITS 071144 (**VHRDE**, remained based at Essendon, Melbourne for support of NEI Government); 1 NEITS 071144-161244; 161244 to PEP ex 1

NEITS Brisbane; [??45-??45 120 Sq NEI]; 19 (NEI) Squadron 1045-0246 (1045 based Essendon); 0246 transferred to 18 Sq Tjililitan.

L2-104 c/n 1310 ex L2-42 RNMFS; assigned TSM ex Pool Sq 0244; TSM until at least 0744, **VHRDS** per 0544; [PEP Canberra 281044-301044; 171244 from PEP Canberra to Melbourne; PEP based Melbourne 171244 until at least 300145, **VHRDF**]; [PEP Canberra 0445-0545; ??45-??45 120 Sq NEI]; 19 (NEI) Squadron 1245-0246; 0246 transferred to 18 Sq Tjililitan.

L2-105 c/n 1312 ex L2-44 RNMFS; [PEP Canberra 0244-0544]; probably 1 NEITS 1044-1244 (probably **VHRDT**); [PEP based Melbourne from at least 030245 to 070245]; 080245 delivered 1 NEITS Brisbane; 1 NEITS 080245 to at least 150245; [PEP Canberra 0345]; 19 (NEI) Squadron 1245-0246; 0246 transferred to 18 Sq Tjililitan.

Remarks: Lodestars LT932 and LT935 were not used by TSM at Laverton but went from the NEI Aircraft & Personnel Pool (NEI Pool Squadron) via ANA at Parafield, Adelaide for overhaul (LT932), respectively ANA at Essendon, Melbourne for the removal of the ferry tanks and a necessary inspection to the RAAF at Laverton, Melbourne. See below for further details on NEI use.

It is remarked that several internet sites wrongly list the FY serials of LT931 and LT932 as 42-56034 respectively 42-56060. Reader is further advised that the RAAF record card of the LT932 very likely shows a miswriting in the first entry; 37 Squadron should read 1 AD and vice versa. NEI documents clearly state that the date 110144 is the date the NEI Aircraft and Personnel Pool transferred the aircraft to 1 AD.

LT932 42-56034 [delivered ex factory 0743; delivered RNMFS, Jackson 180743]. Ac left Jackson on 110843 with an RNMFS crew for the ferry flight to Australia. Arrived at Laverton, Melbourne on 230843 and went to ANA at Essendon for removal of ferry tanks and post-ferry inspection on the next day. Ready 280843 and left for Canberra with final destination Batchelor. Ac had been assigned to 18 Squadron NEI and was received at Batchelor on 020943 (to be operated by flying personnel put on operational rest late 0843, with as Captain Elt A. Hagers). Transferred to the NEI Pool Squadron in Canberra on approximately 070144 but was close to overhaul and engine change. Delivered 1 AD at Laverton,

Melbourne 110144 and received 37 Squadron from 1 AD on 300344 for the ferry of the aircraft to ANA at Parafield, Adelaide for 480-hours overhaul plus engine change. Used on loan by 37 Squadron RAAF after overhaul. [020345 issued PEP ex 37 Sq but returned to 37 Sq on loan 170445; 090845 received 7 AD for inspection and repairs; held serviceable at Tocumwal; issued PEP 150446].

LT935 43-16458 [delivered ex factory 1243; delivered RNMFS Jackson 061243]; ferried by ATC USAAF to Australia 1243, to ANA at Essendon late 1243 for removal of ferry tanks and post-ferry inspection. Ac was received at 1 AD, Laverton 050144 and received by 37 Squadron RAAF 070144. Used on loan by 37 Squadron RAAF. [received 2 AD for inspection 181245; issued PEP ex 2 AD 110646].

Lockheed L12A **L2-106** (c/n 1309, ex L2-41 RNMFS) was never used by TSM. This aircraft, flown from Jackson to Los Angeles on 200543 for dismantling and packing, was the second of seven L12As that left Jackson with destination Australia. It probably arrived in Australia damaged and was broken up for spares at the NEI Pool Squadron. The ac was written off before 1 July 1944 (the date of the first ML strength figures mentioning the L12As). Strength figures from that date always state a total of six L12As (L2-100 to L2-105 incl.). The ac was among the first few that arrived in Sydney but was the final one taken administratively on strength (as it was registered L2-106).

See Appendix 4 for USAAF surplus C-47s and one Douglas DC-3D delivered to 19 (NEI) Squadron during 1946. Apart from five C-47s selected for reducing to spares after arrival at Archerfield and two C-47s bought outright as spares all were still in service with 19 (NEI) Squadron on 1 November 1946.

Sources: Letter A.4.38.01, 30 December 1947 Kol C.W. van der Eem to CLN, Appendices (write-off dates individual ac); Nota XII/1-46U, 6 June 1946, Kantoor Luchtvaartzaken aan Legercommandant, Appendices (dates received RNMFS or accepted ML Australia, write-off dates individual ac); Letter Netherlands Purchasing Commission 48671, 29 August 1945, Captain T.H. Leegstra to Australian Air Mission, Royal Australian Air Force Representative (FY serials written off Lend-Lease aircraft); various logbooks; various letters and notes of Hoofdkwartier

KNIL/DvO (Afdeeling C) concerning aircraft assignments; RAAF record cards B-25s (via RAAF Historical Section) and C-60s (ANA via Gordon Birkett); Stand personeel nr. 2 N.E.I.T.S. na overgave als in schrijven nr. 451/V/U ddo. 7 November '44 (remarks on L2-103 and N5-180); aircraft data NEI C-47s and C-60s received from Gerard Casius (his research in the U.S. National Archives and the USAF Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB); dated photographs of aircraft mentioned.

Appendix 3

North American TB-25s of the RAPWI Detachment Kemajoran October 1945-March 1946 in order of issue (mentioned are ML serial, USAAF FY serial, date received Kemajoran, (seconded from), period of use, date transferred and destination if applicable and as far as is known).

N5-128 41-12935 10.45 to Kemajoran (PEP det.), 10.45 to PEP Bundaberg for maintenance.

N5-129 41-12936 10.45 to Kemajoran (PEP det.), 11.45-12.45 (PEP det.), 11.01.46 to 18 Sq Tjililitan.

N5-146 42-32512 10.45 to Kemajoran (PEP det.), 11.45 (from PEP to 18 Sq det.), 12.45 to 18 Sq Tjililitan.

N5-163 42-87350 10.45 to Kemajoran (PEP det.), 08.11.45 to PEP Bundaberg for maintenance, [12.45 to 18 Sq Tjililitan ex PEP].

N5-173 42-87257 10.45 to Kemajoran (PEP det.), 11.45 (PEP det.), 12.45-03.46 (18 Sq det.).

N5-184 42-3282 10.45 to Kemajoran (PEP det.), c. 01.11.45 to PEP for maintenance.

N5-149 42-32511 11.45 to Kemajoran (PEP det.), probably 12.45 (PEP det.), probably 01.46 (18 Sq det.).

N5-151 42-32485 11.45 to Kemajoran (18 Sq det.), 12.45 (18 Sq det.), 11.01.46 to 18 Sq Tjililitan.

N5-154 41-30584 11.45 to Kemajoran (PEP det.), 12.45 (PEP det.), 01.46 to 18 Sq Tjililitan, 02.46-03.46 Kemajoran (18 Sq det.).

N5-165 41-30590 01.46 to Kemajoran (18 Sq det.), 02.46-03.46 (18 Sq det.).

N5-188 42-87260 01.46 to Kemajoran (18 Sq det.), 02.46-03.46 (18 Sq det.).

N5-248 44-29516 01.46 to Kemajoran (18 Sq det., ex 18 Sq Tjililitan), 02.46-03.46 (18 Sq det.).

N5-148 42-32338 probably 01.46 or 02.46 to Kemajoran (18 Sq det.), 03.46 (18 Sq det.).

Remarks. The detachment at Kemajoran on 161045 and on 011145 fully consisted of ac and crews from the N.E.I.-P.E.P. On 011245 it consisted of ac and crews of the P.E.P. as well as of 18 Squadron and on 010246 and 010346 fully of ac and crews of 18 Squadron.

On occasion one or two additional TB-25s were borrowed from 18 Squadron Tjililitan (for example N5-129 during 02.46 and 03.46).

Sources: various logbooks; interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij, J.H. Lukkien, A.J. van der Heiden, F. Olsen, V.N. Jansen, J.A.J. Oonincx and D.T. de Bont.

Appendix 4

The surplus Douglas C-47 Dakota's and Douglas C-54 Skymasters of 19 (N.E.I.) Squadron, 1945-1946

The Douglas C-47s and C-47As bought from USAAF surplus stocks at Clark Field, Manila

In October-November 1945 the NEI Government bought 17 surplus USAAF C-47 and C-47A aircraft from the Manila Office of the Foreign Liquidation Commissioner (FLC), belonging to the State Department of the U.S. Government, plus two more as spares. The aircraft were ordered on 31 October by the liaison officer of the Dutch Bevelhebber Strijdkrachten Oosten (BSO, Commander Dutch Forces in the East) in Manila, naval officer KLTZ C. den Hollander. Den Hollander had been in Japan in September 1945 to arrange for the repatriation of Dutch PoWs liberated there and in Okinawa. He had followed the PoWs to the Philippines that month after their transfer by the American Occupation

Forces. With the PoWs nicely settled in an encampment near Manila of the 5th Replacement Depot, and from around 1 October in the new 62nd Replacement Depot encampment to the South of Manila, Den Hollanders job was enlarged with logistical tasks. He was soon buying ships, trucks and aircraft for the NEI forces. As the C-47 aircraft did cost only U.S. dollar 20,000.00 a piece he bought 17 instead of the 15 he was asked to order. As there were only few spare parts for sale he also ordered two more written off C-47s as spares.

During October 1945 the U.S. dollars needed were arranged for by the NEI Government in Australia although the aircraft (as well as those bought in the U.S.A., see below) were eventually paid for using a dollar loan from the U.S. State Department concluded on 11 July 1946. Politics entered the game at this point as the American War Department on 19 October 1945 had prescribed (following a State Department directive) that the USAAF was not to sell to the NEI war materials that could be used to restore colonial rule over the NEI. The contract partner for the FLC (and the Reconstructing Finance Corporation in the U.S.A., see later) consequently became the NEI Department of Public Works and the official use for the C-47s became the repatriation of liberated PoWs and civilian internees as well as relief flights to the NEI islands. On 31 October Den Hollander sent a message to 19 (NEI) Squadron in Brisbane confirming that the aircraft were ready for transfer and asked to send ferry crews. That took some time to arrange for as the squadron was extremely busy at the time. A week later Den Hollander sent another message that asked for ferry crews at the earliest possible time as there were other potential buyers with an eye for the best among the approximately 50 surplus C-47s. Although Den Hollander had had the bought aircraft marked appropriately he feared piracy.

On 10 November Maj R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M., Deputy CO of 19 (NEI) Squadron, flew to Manila per C-47 (the DT942) as the CO of a team of 19 men, himself included. They arrived at Clark Field two days later. There were 12 technicians and seven pilots. Former KNILM were technical officers Elts E.J. van Mens and F.T. Cornelissen and chief mechanics S. Elleman Sr, M. Koster (a former flight engineer) and F. Lischer. Apart from Lischer, also a former flight engineer who returned from the West Indies in May 1945, all ex PoWs. Six of the total

of seven flight mechanics were (unknown by name) regular ML NCOs, also including a number of former PoWs. The seventh flight mechanic was former KNILM (student) flight engineer SM Van de Graaf. The 12 technicians were to inspect and ready the aircraft, the flight mechanics also to fly as such on the ferry flights. The seven pilots (Wittert van Hoogland included) had to do the acceptance test and ferry flights. The pilots were Kap G. van Messel, Elt H.H.J. Simons, Elt H. Schultz and Tlt W. Versteegh Jr (recently returned from the West Indies), all former KNILM and Tlt J.P.C. Blauw and an unknown ML pilot. The 2nd pilot of Maj Wittert van Hoogland, Tlt A. Breebaart (an experienced B-25 pilot), was trained on the C-47 to full solo standard by the former at Clark Field and added to the group as a ferry pilot. Maj Wittert van Hoogland and Kap Van Messel did the acceptance test flying although the former could air test only two of the aircraft. Wittert van Hoogland had to return with the DT942 after the definitive contract had been signed to deliver it to the NEI authorities and pick up ferry personnel for Clark Field.

After a meeting between Wittert van Hoogland and Van Messel with Den Hollander in Manila in the evening of 12 November the aircraft inspections started on the next day. The C-47s were hardly in the “almost new” condition they had been advertised with and approximately three aircraft proved to be unacceptable due to missing parts or damage and had to be exchanged for others. When opened up many airframe parts showed some signs of corrosion as was fairly common in the Pacific theatre and all had flown between 1,500 and 2,000 hours which was considered relatively low for C-47s, however. The aircraft had been selected in October on the basis of the data in the aircraft forms and their external appearance by a small team of ML mechanics (former PoWs) led by Kap W.C. Schoof. Schoof, a former 18 Squadron NEI B-25 pilot, was the administrative CO of the ML personnel at the 5th and later the 62nd Replacement Depot. The technical personnel of Wittert van Hooglands party consisted of C-47 specialists and had to check each plane more thoroughly. Various small repairs had to be carried out as most of the aircraft had not flown for several months and had been parked unattended to in the open. To speed up the inspections and repairs a number of the liberated ML PoWs from the 62nd Replacement Depot were employed as well.

As the USAAF serials of the aircraft were mentioned in the contract aircraft changes meant this had to be revised. The definite contract was signed by Den Hollander on behalf of Kol C.J. Warners, (militarised) director of the NEI Department of Public Works, on 21 November. Several of the C-47s left for Australia in the period of 21 to 23 November (incl.) carrying former Dutch PoWs as passengers. Wittert van Hoogland and his flight engineer and aviation wireless operator departed with the DT942 (also carrying a number of former PoWs) on 23 November for Brisbane, arriving on the next day. Having delivered the contract with an accompanying letter from Den Hollander to Kol Warners and having briefed several authorities on the progress at Clark Field, Wittert van Hoogland left for Clark Field again on 28 November. He returned with the ferry crews that had already arrived in Brisbane together with some newly selected personnel and arrived in Manila on 30 November.

Also on the remaining ferry flights to Australia former PoWs were flown out, the ML men in part to Brisbane but NEI Army personnel and some of the ML men to Balikpapan. Most of the C-47s flew the direct route to Australia via Biak but some went via Balikpapan (to deliver the ex PoWs) and Penfoei (Timor), where one crashed on landing early December. The aircraft flown by Elt Schultz (DT965) landed on its belly and needed two new propellers and some other parts. How to get these to Penfoei was quite a puzzle as propellers did not fit in the C-47 cabin. No problem at all for the consulted USAAF operations officer, however. One of the aircraft bought for spares was traded in for another one that had arrived more recently and was to be written off for spares too. It was considered fit for one final flight and with a few holes in the fuselage to be able to fit in the propellers it was flown to Penfoei without any problems. When the last of the C-47s had left also Wittert van Hoogland and the remaining technical personnel plus some former ML PoWs left Clark Field on 9 December 1945 to arrive back in Brisbane with a short night stop in Biak on the next day.

After their arrival at Archerfield the surplus C-47s went through an inspection and repair program with 19 (NEI) Squadron and in part with Australian National Airways at Archerfield during which five were selected for cannibalisation. The need for C-47 spares had become extremely high due to the very busy flight schedules after VJ Day and

although two C-47s had been bought as spares and some parts could be obtained somewhat irregularly from American stores at Biak much more was needed. As spares could not be obtained from the Douglas Company (see below) or via RAAF channels due to the ending of Lend-Lease the five cannibalised aircraft were eventually dismantled completely and fully split up in components and parts. They were written off in the period of 18 up to and including 30 June 1946. Twelve new Dakota's could be added to the active fleet in the period of January 1946 up to and including March 1946, however, replacing eight TB-25 Mitchells and three Lockheed L12As. The spares supply improved greatly and just in time when spares ordered with Canadair began to arrive in April 1946 (see below).

The following aircraft were delivered.

(Listed are the ML serial, USAAF Fiscal Year serial, C-47 sub type, specifics known from the USAAF records and date written off if applicable. In the USAAF documentation all ac were first reported as on the Manila Excess Inventory List 311245 and last reported as on this list 230746).

DT951 42-23419 (C-47A-20-DL) 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported on the Excess Inventory List.

DT952 41-18581 (C-47-DL) 211145 sold NEI to Government, 311245 reported received from Tacloban.

DT953 41-18671 (C-47-DL) 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported received from Tacloban, condemned.

DT954 41-38740 (C-47-DL) 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported received from Tacloban, cancelled.

DT955 43-15235 (C-47A-80-DL) 211145 sold to NEI Government, 3112.5 reported received from Tacloban.

DT956 42-100475 (C-47A-65-DL) 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported received from Tacloban; reduced to spares after arrival at Archerfield; w.o. in period 180646-300646.

DT957 42-100718 (C-47A-70-DL) 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported received from Tacloban.

DT958 42-100797 (C-47A-70-DL) 211145 sold to NEI Government; reduced to spares after arrival at Archerfield; w.o. in period 180646-300646.

DT959 42-93310 (C-47A-25-DK) 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported on the Excess Inventory List and reported ferried to Australia.

DT960 42-93301 (C-47A-25-DK) 211145 sold to NEI Government; reduced to spares after arrival at Archerfield; w.o. in period 180646-300646.

DT961 42-93297 (C-47A-25-DK) 211145 sold to NEI Government; reduced to spares after arrival at Archerfield; w.o. in period 180646-300646.

DT962 42-93571 (C-47A-25-DK) 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported on the Excess Inventory List.

DT963 42-92796 (C-47A-15-DK) addition to original order, 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported on the Excess Inventory List.

DT964 43-48235 (C-47A-30-DK) addition to original order, 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported on the Excess Inventory List.

DT965 43-48175 (C-47A-30-DK), probably a replacement ac, 211145 sold to NEI Government; reduced to spares after arrival at Archerfield; w.o. in period 180646-300646.

DT966 42-92038 (C-47A-DK) probably a replacement ac, 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 reported on the Excess Inventory List, excluded.

DT967 42-93670 (C-47A-25-DK) probably a replacement ac, 211145 sold to NEI Government, 311245 to Excess Inventory List.

41-18647 (C-47-DL) sold to NEI Government as spares; 311245 reported condemned, to spares.

41-38665 (C-47-DL) sold to NEI Government as spares; 311245 reported written off and received from Tacloban, cancelled.

Remarks. One of the above two ac 1245 flown to Penfoei, Timor with two spare propellers for the repair of DT965. Ac dismantled after this final flight. Some parts such as the ailerons were taken off at Penfoei and used to replace damaged items of DT965. The other ac was dismantled at Clark Field and components and parts were flown with other ML C-47s to Archerfield, Australia. The ac bought as spares were not identified in the contract by the Fiscal Year serial. The above mentioned two serials are, however, of ac that were written off for spares while the NEI Government was invoiced for them.

The aircraft were flown to Australia with the ML serial on the nose but without the letter part (9xx only) and the USAAF FY serial still on the vertical tail plane. VH call signs were applied on arrival in Australia at the location of the USAAF serial. Call signs, in order of the DT serial, were the following: **VHREE** to **VHREU** incl.

The Douglas C-47A surplus aircraft obtained in the U.S.A., the Douglas DC-3D bought from Douglas and the Douglas C-54As leased via the RFC

During October-November 1945 a team of the Netherlands Purchasing Commission (NPC) in Washington selected at Bush Field (Georgia) and at Walnut Ridge (Arkansas) twelve, respectively ten C-47As (and also four Douglas C-54s, see later) from the USAAF Excess Inventory List for the NEI Department of Public Works. Preliminary orders with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC, which handled the disposal of surplus war assets in the U.S.A.) were concluded in November by LKol S. van Braam, M.Sc., a technical officer of the ML posted at the NPC. The aircraft, as those in Manila, did cost U.S. dollar 20,000.00 each. On average the aircraft had flown 1,500 hours, not much for C-47s, but all needed major overhaul. Unfortunately, the Douglas company was unable to overhaul these aircraft and modify ten of them to be delivered as passenger planes. This as a consequence of the closing of the U.S. Government owned Oklahoma City (DK) plant, where production officially ended on 17 August 1945, and concentration on DC-6 production after VJ Day. The facility in Oklahoma City was transferred to the U.S. Government on 1 November.

Only the C-117A production at Oklahoma City could in part be saved, the aircraft already on the production line and for which all components and parts were available were to be completed as civilian DC-3Ds. The assembly and fitting out of these airplanes was transferred to Orchard Place/Douglas Field, near Chicago, in September-October 1945. Douglas then sold all that was left from the C-47 production to Canadair which firm bought all remaining tooling, spare components and parts from the C-47/DC-3 production and became an official Douglas approved conversion centre for C-47s.

In case a deal with Canadair would fall through 19 (NEI) Squadron was ordered to send a technical team to Manila to select a second batch of surplus C-47s. Eight men of the unit left Brisbane in the night of 22 to 23 January per American C-47 (with a RAAF crew). Civilian chief mechanic (former KNILM internee) H. van der Horst was in charge. The group further consisted of flight engineer Sgt R.H. van Oort (a regular NCO and former PoW as well) and six war volunteers from the Netherlands. The expected message to conclude a preliminary order did not come but the personnel was left in Manila and four of the men followed a 14 days C-54 maintenance course at Clark Field, while the negotiations with Canadair were pending. As soon as these had been positively concluded they were ordered back to Archerfield and left on 23 February with a 19 (NEI) Squadron C-47.

The negotiations in Canada took some time but Canadair opened up an overhaul and conversion plant in the former Noorduyn factory in Cartierville, Quebec (just outside Montreal) in January 1946 already. On 20 February 1946, after the contracts with the RFC had been finalised, the NPC concluded two definitive contracts with Canadair on behalf of Kol Warners. One arranged for the overhaul of 12 C-47A freighters and the other one the overhaul and modification into (21 seat) passenger aircraft of 10 C-47As. A special addition was made concerning the inspection and refurbishment as far as would be necessary of one C-117A/DC-3D passenger aircraft. The eleven passenger-aircraft were to go to the so-called Netherlands Indies Government Air Transport (NIGAT) which was a semi-military interim organization that was to grow into a new civilian airline organization in the NEI in due course. Nicely price-tagged spares were bought from Canadair separately.

The single Douglas DC-3D had been bought directly from Douglas. It was one of 28 DC-3Ds produced with components and parts left over from the cancelled C-117A production in Oklahoma City. Only 17 C-117As, in low rate production next to C-47s, had been delivered while 114 of these aircraft were cancelled directly after VJ Day. The NPC bought the first of the DC-3Ds which was delivered by Douglas in January 1946 and accepted by the NPC on 1 February after a short period of factory test and demonstration flying. It was ferried to Canada with some of the surplus Dakota's in February 1946. The aircraft was in all aspects a standard C-117A-1-DK with the supercharger equipped engines of the C-47B and the non-reinforced cabin floor and absent freight door of the DC-3, with a 21-seat passenger configuration.

The NPC did the acceptance test flying and formal acceptance of the C-47As and the DC-3D and also hired six American ferry crews to ferry the aircraft via the United Kingdom to Kemajoran, Batavia. Canadair equipped all aircraft with four temporary extra tanks on the cabin floor to enable them to cross the Atlantic. The 23 Dakota's arrived without much problems, six of the freighters arriving first in April 1946. The next six aircraft followed in June, seven aircraft in August and the final four including the DC-3D arrived at Kemajoran in October 1946.

The four C-54s (built at the Chicago plant where the C-117A was completed) selected at Walnut Ridge were leased from the RFC in January 1946 by NPC on behalf of the NEI Department of Public Works. The aircraft were to be delivered fully serviceable and were first ferried to Burbank, California for engine inspection by the Pacific Air Motors Corporation. Maj Van Breemen had been appointed project officer and left Brisbane for the U.S.A. per USAAF transport aircraft on 25 April to gather information for the planned C-54 Batavia-Los Angeles route with the NPC and U.S. Government agencies. He subsequently arrived with a team of 19 (NEI) Squadron consisting of ground technicians and ferry pilots and crewmembers at Burbank on 5 May 1946. After taking over the first C-54 most of the personnel entered C-54 conversion courses with the Douglas training center at Santa Monica (Cal.), where the C-54/DC-4 was built. The flying training started with some local flying in the final week of May on the DT994. Douglas also assisted with the supply of the necessary C-54A documentation.

The four aircraft were ready and accepted at Burbank in the period of May up to and including July 1946. After the flight training with Douglas the first two C-54s were used by the two ML ferry crews for long range flight training from Santa Monica. The DT994 and DT995 were then ferried to Archerfield, Brisbane. Captains of the two crews were Maj Van Breemen and Kap Van Messel. The two aircraft followed the Pacific ferry route and flew via Biak to Archerfield to arrive on 15, respectively 22 July 1946. The two other aircraft were ferried by American ferry crews hired by the NPC and were delivered at Kemajoran, Batavia probably in August 1946.

The following Douglas C-47 aircraft were delivered.

(Listed are the ML serial, USAAF Fiscal Year serial, C-47 sub type, specifics known from the USAAF records, delivery data from notes and letters NPC and Hoofdkwartier ML Batavia, change of the ML serial into a NIGAT serial)

DT970 43-15941 (C-47A-90-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 0945 reported at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0446.

DT971 43-15575 (C-47A-85-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 0945 reported at Bush Field (GA), 1245 reported on the Excess Inventory List, delivered Batavia 0446.

DT972 unknown (C-47A) 0246 sold to NEI Government, ac was selected 1045 by NPC at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0446.

DT973 43-15224 (C-47A-80-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 0945 reported at Bush Field (GA), 1145 reported on the Excess Inventory List, delivered Batavia 0446.

DT974 43-15253 (C-47A-80-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, ac was selected 1045 by NPC at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0446.

DT975 43-15157 (C-47A-80-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1145 reported at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0446.

DT976 43-15145 (C-47A-80-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1145 reported at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0646.

DT977 42-93698 (C-47A-25-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 0945 reported at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0646.

DT978 43-15206 (C-47A-80-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 0945 reported at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0646.

DT979 43-15378 (C-47A-80-DL, 0246 sold to NEI Government, 0945 reported at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0646, converted into a C-47B at Kemajoran in period 0946-0547 (probably with the supercharged engines and parts from the written off DT948).

DT980 42-93063 (C-47A-20-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, ac was selected 1045 by NPC at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0646.

DT981 42-93781 (C-47A-25-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 0945 reported at Bush Field (GA), delivered Batavia 0646.

DT982 42-100542 (C-47A-65-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1045 reported at Walnut Ridge (Arkansas), delivered Batavia 0846, became **NI-471**.

DT983 42-93680 (C-47A25-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1045 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 0846, became **NI-472**.

DT984 42-100816 (C-47A-70-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1145 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 0846, became **NI-473**.

DT985) 42-92870 (C-47A-15-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1045 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 0846, became **NI-474**.

DT986 42-93540 (C-47A-25-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1045 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 0846, became **NI-475**.

DT987 42-93605 (C-47A-25-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1045 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 0846, became **NI-476**.

DT988 43-15192 (C-47A-80-DL) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1145 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 0846, became **NI-477**.

DT989 42-93813 (C-47A-25-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1145 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 1046, became **NI-478**.

DT990 42-93170 (C-47A-20-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1145 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 1046, became **NI-479**.

DT991 42-92686 (C-47A-10-DK) 0246 sold to NEI Government, 1045 reported at Walnut Ridge, delivered Batavia 1046, became **NI-480**.

DT992 none (c/n 42954) DC-3D delivered by Douglas and sold to NEI Government 0146, accepted NPC 010246, delivered Batavia 1046, became **NI-470**.

The following Douglas C-54A-15-DCs were delivered.

DT994 42-72293 0146 leased to NEI Government, 0546 accepted at Burbank, Cal. after engine inspection; 0546 used for flight training Santa Monica, Cal., 0746 delivered Archerfield (as DT994), became **PK-DSA** 1046.

DT995 42-72296 0146 leased to NEI Government, c. 0646 accepted at Burbank, Cal. after engine inspection; 0746 delivered Archerfield (as DT995), became **PK-DSB** 1046.

DT996 42-72268 0146 leased to NEI Government, c. 0746 accepted at Burbank, Cal. after engine inspection; c. 0846 delivered Batavia (as DT996), became **PK-DSC** 1046.

DT997 42-72267 0146 leased to NEI Government, 0746 accepted at Burbank, Cal. after engine inspection; c. 0846 delivered Batavia (as DT997), became **PK-DSD** 1046.

Remarks. DT serials of the C-47s were used administrative only and were not carried on the aircraft. On the nose of the C-47s the serial was carried as 9xx. All freight-aircraft received an Australian VH call sign on the vertical tail on arrival. These were, in the order of the DT serial, **VHREX-VHREZ** incl., **VHRCO-VHRCR** incl., **VHRCT-VHRCW** incl. and **VHRCY**. The 11 passenger-aircraft received an NI serial (NIGAT serial) after arrival at Batavia in August, respectively October 1946, see the listing above. They also received a civilian paint scheme.

Serial DT993 was reserved for a surplus C-47 but not used.

The C-54s initially carried ML serials (9xx on the nose and the DT serial on the fuselage) but were officially never on the strength of 19 (NEI)

Squadron and always on that of the NIGAT. The former in contrast to the passenger C-47s which received NI serials (NI-4xx small on the nose and the same but much larger on the fuselage) but were all on strength with 19 (NEI) Squadron. Serials NI-540 to NI-543 incl. were allotted to the C-54s by the NIGAT but not carried on the aircraft. In October 1946 the aircraft directly received a civilian PK registration and a civilian paint scheme.

Sources: Letter A.4.38.01, 30 December 1947, Kol C.W. van der Eem to CLN, Appendices, Lijst vliegtuigen in gebruik sinds oprichting No. 1 N.E.I.T.S. (it is noted that this listing cites incorrect ML serials for the C-54 ac, given the photographic evidence available); aircraft data NEI C-47s received from Gerard Casius (his research in the U.S. National Archives and the USAF Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB); aircraft data on the C-54As received from Nico Geldhof; dated photographs of aircraft mentioned; aircraft data on the Manila aircraft with listing of USAAF FY serials received from R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M.; interviews author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M., G. van Messel, B.J. Fiedeldij, V.N. Jansen, R. Timmermans and A. Gloudemans; e-mails Jan Hagens to author October 2017-February 2018; Kemajoran, pp. 67, 82-86, 92.

Appendix 5: The Base Ops Andir unit (Reconnaissance and Communication unit Andir)

The Base Ops Andir unit also called the Reconnaissance and Communication unit Andir was officially established on 1 May 1946 at Andir, Bandoeng as a part of the Andir airbase organization but started operations in mid-April already. CO was Kap H.J.A.C. Arens. The Japanese communication and transport aircraft of the unit came from the RAPWI Air Department and were first (administratively) transferred to 18 Squadron on 15 April and then from 18 Squadron to Andir airbase (2 VB) on 1 May 1946. With British permission the remaining serviceable five Tachikawa Ki54 Soren communication aircraft (two coming from Palembang), four Mitsubishi Ki57 Topsy transport aircraft and two Nakajima L2D Tabby's (a Japanese DC-3 version) were reorganized into an ML/KNIL military transport and communication unit to support the NEI and Dutch army forces deploying in Java at the time. By May all aircraft which had suffered from overdue inspections and overhauls were in a

rather good condition again after inspection and repair with 1 VRA, the technical depot of the ML at Andir. They carried an ML serial in the bracket 801-811 (incl.) and NEI national markings.

Daily maintenance of the aircraft was done by 1 VRA personnel from the so-called Montage Afdeeling (assembly department) which was strengthened with a group of Japanese maintenance personnel. A team of 1 VRA also performed the necessary repairs when an aircraft had been stranded at other airfields such as Semarang or Tandjung Perak. The flying personnel consisted of ML and Japanese pilots which initially, as the Japanese ground personnel with 1 VRA, still belonged (administratively) to the RAPWI Air Department. Although most of the Japanese personnel on strength with the Air Department in April (around 130) was repatriated to Japan, at least 40 maintenance personnel and some of the Japanese pilots remained and were transferred from "Arens Airlines" to the new unit. Japanese PoWs flew most of the communication sorties while ML pilots and mechanics did the (photo) reconnaissance work. ML mechanics working with 1 VRA regularly acted as flight mechanic and also flew with the Japanese pilots. On photo reconnaissance sorties an aviation photographer was borrowed from the Photo School which was forming at Andir and did the photo processing for the unit.

The unit mainly supported B-Division of the combined Royal NEI Army/Royal Netherlands Army force in Java. This force was deploying during April to relieve British troops and strengthen the already available KNIL units and units from the Netherlands. The B-Division deployed around the cities Batavia, Buitenzorg, Bandoeng and Semarang in western and central Java. Its Brigades were based in enclaves which were spread over a huge area making regular communication flights an absolute necessity as there was no road or rail traffic possible.

Both the Sorens and the Topsy's were used for reconnaissance and photo reconnaissance missions around the enclave Bandoeng from April 1946. The completely surrounded beleaguered city of Bandoeng could only be supplied from the air and the troops were in vulnerable positions and during April still without any artillery. One of the Sorens was transferred to Tandjung Perak airbase, Soerabaja and used for reconnaissance missions around the enclave Soerabaja from July 1946.

The aircraft and crew supported the main force of the NEI/Dutch A-Division which also included a Dutch Marines Brigade. Use of the Sorens and Topsy's was out of necessity, due to a lack of aircraft suitable for these missions, until Piper L-4Js of the ML gradually took over in the period of 5 August up to late September 1946.

The reconnaissance missions around Bandoeng were carried out on orders from the CO B-Division and the CO of the V-Brigade of this Division. 2500 men of the V-Brigade (three Infantry Battalions from the Netherlands) were flown from Kemajoran to Andir by 31 Squadron RAF to augment battalion Inf. V of the KNIL in early April. The daily missions were meant to keep track of the movements of Japanese armed Indonesian nationalist troops on the edges of the enclave around Bandoeng occupied by the V-Brigade. The first reconnaissance flights were already made in early April by RAPWI-AIR and were flown (not exactly according to the rules) with a Soren still painted white and carrying green surrender markings.

From mid-April a daily mission with one aircraft was flown. The ML pilots during the initial series of operational flights in the second half of April and the first half of May were Kap Arens, Kap Lukkien and SM S.A.C. Rijnenberg. In the period of early April up to 5 August 1946 the operational missions around Bandoeng were flown solely with the Sorens and Topsy's and from 5 August also by one Piper L-4J Cub. An L-4J Flight of the recently formed 17 Squadron of the ML took over on 27 September 1946. Aviation photographers SM C.L. Wassenberg and SM Th. van de Water of the Photo School were the regular crew members on the photo reconnaissance missions. They flew as a crew member whenever needed.

Until 5 August about one in every three missions was a photo reconnaissance during which the terrain in front of the V-Brigade troops at a distance of roughly 30 km around Bandoeng was photographed. With initially only one L-4J available the majority of the photo missions were still flown with Sorens and Topsy's until late September. Especially in the southern part of the enclave the situation was critical until an improvised artillery battery came into action for the first time on 29 April. It were the message cylinders dropped by the Soren and Topsy crews that saved troops from Infantry Battalion 1-3RI deployed in this front

sector from being overrun on a number of occasions. When troop concentrations were discovered a B-25 bomber of 18 Squadron was alerted to assist in neutralising this threat but the arrival of this aircraft from Batavia took time. Only in June could a B-25 be stationed at Andir for support.

During the period of July 1946 up to and including September 1946 one of the Sorens of the unit was seconded to 120 Squadron of the ML. It was used as a reconnaissance aircraft from Tandjung Perak airbase at Soerabaja for the support of the main force of the NEI/Dutch A-Division deployed around this city, as mentioned above. Pilot was Elt A.M. Valkenburg who was seconded to 120 Squadron from 19 (NEI) Squadron. He was supposed to fly these missions with a Lockheed L12A but this aircraft was also used to pick up Curtiss P-40 and Allison engine spares at the P.E.P. in Australia and was frequently unserviceable due to a shortage of L12A spares. Most of the missions were flown with the Soren therefore, although this aircraft was officially just a spare. Late September a L-4J Flight of 17 Squadron took over.

From late September 1946 the unit operated as a small military communication and transport unit. Additional ML pilots and a number of mechanics were posted at 2 VB and 1 VRA to replace the last remaining Japanese PoWs. The unit also had to take care of a part of the capacity gap left by 31 Transport Squadron RAF which was disbanded at Kemajoran on 30 September 1946. During October and November 1946 there was a gradual run-down of missions flown with the Sorens, Topsy's and Tabby's. The Japanese aircraft were well worn by now and all were in need of major overhaul. With the spare parts almost gone the only thing that could be done was limiting and spreading hours flown. A few aircraft were cannibalised for spares and the unit kept flying a limited number of missions with the Japanese aircraft until November. Fortunately, 1 VRA received two Lockheed Lodestars (LT932 and LT935) from the P.E.P. in August-September and also operated a Lockheed L12A (L2-107). From October a large part of the communication and transport tasks were flown with these three 1 VRA aircraft. The Base Ops Andir unit was disbanded at the end of November 1946 when the remaining tasks were taken over by the new 20 Squadron of the ML at Tjililitan. Both Lodestars went to the forming 20 Squadron in

the second half of November. This unit also took over some of the personnel of the Base Ops Andir unit. CO during the final months was Kap Lukkien.

Eight of the nine remaining Japanese airplanes were written off in December and ended their lives on an aircraft dump at Andir. One of the Tabby's was assigned as an instructional airframe for the Monteur Opleiding School (Mechanics Training School) at Andir in December 1946. Also a number of Japanese aircraft engines went to the school.

Former RAPWI AIR aircraft (data as far as is known, all ac formally taken on charge 2 VB on 1 May 1946 ex 18 Squadron; listed are ML serial, ac type, details on use, details on disposal).

Tachikawa Ki54 Sorens, Mitsubishi Ki57 Topsy's and Nakajima L2D Tabby's

801 Topsy 1246 wo at Andir.

802 Topsy 1246 wo at Andir.

803 Soren 1246 wo at Andir.

80? Soren 1246 wo at Andir.

80? Soren ??46 wo, probably reduced to spares at 1 VRA.

80? Soren ??46 wo, probably reduced to spares at 1 VRA.

80? Soren 0746-0946 used as a reconnaissance ac for the support of A-Division, based at Tandjung Perak, Soerabaja; 1246 wo at Andir.

808 Topsy ex RAPWI Palembang, 1246 wo at Andir.

809 Topsy ex RAPWI Palembang, 1246 wo at Andir.

81? Tabby 1246 assigned as instructional airframe and from 0147 in use for mechanics training at Andir.

81? Tabby 1246 wo at Andir.

1 VRA aircraft

(Listed are period of use, date transferred, [...] = details on previous use).

Lockheed C-60As

LT932 [150446 issued PEP ex CMU Tocumwal RAAF; 0846 or 0946 ferried from PEP Bundaberg to 1 VRA Andir, taken into reserve]; used Base Ops Andir unit 1046-1146; transferred to 20 Sq 1146.

LT935 [080646 received from 37 Sq RAAF at Richmond and ferried to PEP Bundaberg; received 1 VRA Andir from PEP Bundaberg 010846, taken into reserve]; used Base Ops Andir unit 1046-1146; transferred to 20 Sq 1146.

Lockheed L12A

L2-107 [ex L2-33 c/n 1301, 0342 into Japanese hands at Tasikmalaja, probably to the AURIS as a Japanese gift in 1945, 0546 found back at Tandjung Perak, Soerabaja; after inspection and repairs c. 0746 ferried to 1 VRA, Andir, taken into reserve after further maintenance]; used Base Ops Andir unit 1046-1146.

Sources: Jaarverslag ML 1945-1946, RAPWI-Vliegdienst, Eerste periode (via O.G. Ward, 1984); Rapport Arens, 19 November 1945 (via O.G. Ward, 1984); information received from Herman Arens (via O.G. Ward); interviews by author with J.H. Lukkien and Th. van de Water; military records mentioned ML personnel; information received from J.J. Nortier (Air support to A- and B-Division); dated photographs Topsy and Soren aircraft at Andir; Gerben Tornij, "Japanse vliegtuigen onder Nederlands bevel" in Luchtvaart, 2006-1, pp. 23-25.

Endnotes

[1] Hoofdkwartier KNIL, Beschikking nr. 5, 16 Januari 1943; Headquarters Fifth Air Force Special Orders No. 272, 29 September 1943 (via G. van Messel); interview author with G. van Messel. For the story of the Depot Vliegtuigafdeeling of the ML/KNIL and the evacuations of its Lockheed Lodestar aircraft as well as the evacuations of the KNILM/KLM aircraft to Australia, see www.academia.edu search Peter Boer.

[2] Military records former KNILM/KLM personnel of 18 Squadron NEI and military record A.C. Brand; e-mail Jan Hagens to author, 17 October 2017.

[3] O.G. Ward, *De Militaire Luchtvaart van het KNIL in de jaren 1942-1945* (1985, henceforth Ward), pp. 327-328; interview author with G. van Messel.

[4] Military records mentioned personnel; interview author with G. van Messel.

[5] Interview author with G. van Messel; see also Ward, pp. 328-329.

[6] www.ozatwar.com W.H. Carleton, "Air Transport Allied Air Force, South West Pacific Area"; interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij and G. van Messel.

[7] www.ozatwar.com W.H. Carleton, "Air Transport Allied Air Force, South West Pacific Area"; <http://www.39thassociation.org/history.html>; military records mentioned personnel; interview author with G. van Messel; e-mail Jan Hagens to author, 4 December 2017; Ward, p. 328.

[8] Headquarters Fifth Air Force Special Orders No. 272, 29 September 1943 and Headquarters 374th Troop Carrier Group Special Orders, Number 225, 3 October 1943 (via G. van Messel); military records mentioned personnel; e-mail correspondence Jan Hagens with author October-December 2017.

[9] Interviews author with G. van Messel and R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M.; comments Jan Hagens 1st draft.

[10] A.C. Brand never served with 18 Squadron NEI but had been mobilised by the ML in December 1941 only to be demobilised almost immediately as he was a part of the so-called emergency formation of the KNILM. He was still a civilian (but held the rank of Sgt and was a reserve officer candidate with the ML) in December 1942 when he volunteered and was called up again in active service (military record A.C. Brand; interview author with G. van Messel).

[11] *Sterkte KNIL September 1943* (via J.J. Nortier); interview author with G. van Messel; see also J.J. Nortier, "De Landstrijdkrachten van het

KNIL in Australië... in het jaar 1943” in Stabelan, 16-4, 15 June 1990, p. 31.

[12] Headquarters Fifth Air Force Special Orders No. 272, 29 September 1943 (via G. van Messel); interview author with G. van Messel; www.ozatwar.com W.H. Carleton, “Directorate of Air Transport Allied Air Force, South West Pacific Area”; <http://www.39thassociation.org/history.html>, p. 20.

[13] <http://www.39thassociation.org/history.html>; interview author with G. van Messel,

[14] Interview author with G. van Messel; time schedule received from G. van Messel (1977); see also Ward, pp. 330-331. The times are local time, Brisbane and Port Moresby are in the same time-zone.

[15] Interviews author with G. van Messel and R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M.; logbook Wittert van Hoogland (via Guus van Oorschot); interview with A.G. Ekels (via G. van Messel, interviewer unknown, undated but c. 1947). Ekels largely gave his navigation instruction in practise on operational flights. Later he also gave some navigation instruction and briefings on the meteorological conditions in the NEI at Manbulloo (with squadrons of the 380th Bomb. Group).

[16] Interviews author with G. van Messel, F. Pelder, B. Hulscher, V.N. Jansen and R. Timmermans; logbook V.N. Jansen.

[17] Military records mentioned pilots; e-mail Jan Hagens to author, 17 October 2017; interview author with G. van Messel.

[18] Military record A.C. Brand; interview author with J. Staal.

[19] Military records mentioned pilots; Organisatie Transport Afdeeling Brisbane der Militaire Luchtvaart, No.2, Brisbane 1 Juli 1944 (via B.J. Fiedeldij).

[20] Interviews author with R. Timmermans and V.N. Jansen; military records mentioned pilots.

[21] Military records mentioned aviation wireless operators.

[22] Military records A.F. van Rassel, H. Schultz and J. Gijzemijter.

- [23] Interviews and correspondence author with V.N. Jansen, F. Pelder and C. Busser; military records F. Pelder and C. Busser.
- [24] Interview author with G. van Messel.
- [25] Interview author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. and his logbook (via Guus van Oorschot).
- [26] Interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij and G. van Messel.
- [27] Organisatie Transport Afdeeling Brisbane der Militaire Luchtvaart, No.2, Brisbane 1 Juli 1944 (via B.J. Fiedeldij); interview author with G. van Messel.
- [28] Ibid.; military records mentioned personnel.
- [29] Ibid.; interview author with M.S. Kamminga, M.Sc.; logbook V.N. Jansen.
- [30] Logbook R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M (via Guus van Oorschot).
- [31] Organisatie Transport Afdeeling Brisbane der Militaire Luchtvaart, No.2, Brisbane 1 Juli 1944 (via B.J. Fiedeldij); military records mentioned personnel and J. Verwijs, M.Sc..
- [32] Interviews author with V.N. Jansen and M.S. Kamminga, M.Sc.
- [33] Organisatie Transport Afdeeling Brisbane der Militaire Luchtvaart, No.2, Brisbane 1 Juli 1944 (via B.J. Fiedeldij).
- [34] Interviews author with G. van Messel and R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M.
- [35] Ibid. and logbook Wittert van Hoogland (via Guus van Oorschot).
- [36] Military record J. Verwijs, M.Sc.
- [37] Letter of Commendation, 1 September 1944 from Director of Air Transport SWPA (via G. van Messel); interview author with G. van Messel; logbook extracts T.G.J. van der Schroeff.
- [38] Letter KNIL/DvO nr. MC-32-CA/Air 2-0/69, 16 August 1944 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780); letter nr. MC-44-ML-C/Air 2-0/71, 17 August

1944 (to Secretary of Air Board, ANA via Gordon Birkett); interviews author with G. van Messel and B.J. Fiedeldij. The name Transport Section Brisbane (N.E.I.-T.S.B.) was used as the official postal address within the KNIL from at least March 1944. See letter KNIL/DvO No. C-62-CA/AIR2-0/37, 6 March 1944 (via Jan Hagens). As the T.A. was never informed that this was an official translation of the unit designation it kept using Transport Afdeeling Brisbane in all of its correspondence whether in Dutch or in English until 1 September 1944 (information from G. van Messel).

[39] Ward, pp. 352-356; interview author with A.J. van der Heiden.

[40] Organisatie Transport Afdeeling Brisbane der Militaire Luchtvaart, No. 2, Brisbane, 1 Juli 1944 (via B.J. Fiedeldij); Stand personeel Nr. 2 N.E.I.T.S. na overgave als in schrijven nr. 451/V/U ddo. 7 November '44 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780).

[41] Letter KNIL MC-102-NI-GS/EQ1-0/103, voorziening van materieel No. 2 N.E.I.T.S., 28 September 1944 (NIMH ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780); interviews author with G. van Messel and A.J. van der Heiden; logbook A.J. van der Heiden.

[42] Ibid.; Stand personeel Nr. 2 N.E.I.T.S. na overgave als in schrijven nr. 451/V/U ddo. 7 November '44 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780).

[43] Letter KNIL MC-102-NI-GS/EQ1-0/103, 28 September 1944 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780), pt. 2; military records mentioned personnel; interview author with F.H. Florentinus.

[44] Opgave Personeel Nr. 2 N.E.I.T.S. 6 November 1944 (listing of personnel as of end of October 1944, via G. van Messel).

[45] Military records mentioned personnel.

[46] Pool is no longer mentioned on the personnel listing mentioned in [44], according to R. Timmermans he left together with the four mentioned ML aviation wireless operators, who are also no longer listed.

[47] Van Rassel is not yet mentioned on the listing mentioned in [44] but is listed as a 2nd pilot on 7 November 1944 (Stand personeel Nr. 2 N.E.I.T.S. na overgave als in schrijven nr. 451/V/U ddo. 7 November '44, NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780).

- [48] Interviews author with G. van Messel and B.H. Klaassens.
- [49] Military records mentioned personnel; interview author with G. van Messel.
- [50] Interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij, A.B. Wolff and G. van Messel.
- [51] Military records mentioned personnel.
- [52] Nota XII/1-46U, 6 June 1946, Kantoor Luchtvaartzaken aan Legercommandant, Appendices (NIMH, via O.G. Ward). Reader is advised that the arrival dates for the Lodestars mentioned in the Nota are, in part, the dates the ac were delivered at the RNMFS in the U.S.A. Aircraft data on C-47s and C-60s received from Gerard Casius (his research at the U.S. National Archives and the USAF Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB); Operations Record Book 18 Squadron NEI (ANA, copy NIMH); logbooks R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. (via Guus van Oorschot) and A.J. van der Heiden; interview author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and his military record; interview and correspondence author with C. Bijlsma.
- [53] Military records of mentioned persons (reader is advised that E. de Graaf changed his name after his post-war household move to Australia into E. van der Graaff); interview author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and information received from Jan Hagens (e-mails to author November 2017).
- [54] Nota XII/1-46U, 6 June 1946, Kantoor Luchtvaartzaken aan Legercommandant, Appendices (NIMH, via O.G. Ward). Reader is advised that the arrival dates for the Lodestars mentioned in the Nota are, in part, the dates the ac were received at the RNMFS in the U.S.A. The date arrived in Australia given for Dakota DT937 is actually the one for DT938. The approximate date DT937 was received at Canberra after the post-ferry work at ANA has been derived from correspondence of A.J. de Vries. Aircraft data on C-47s and C-60s received from Gerard Casius (his research at the U.S. National Archives and the USAF Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB); interviews author with C. Bijlsma, A.J. van der Heiden (1984) and A.J. de Vries (1973).

[55] Military records persons mentioned; interviews author with C. Bijlsma and A.J. de Vries (1973); information received from Jan Hagens (e-mails to author November 2017).

[56] Operations Record Book 18 Squadron NEI (ANA, copy at NIMH); interviews author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and A.J. van der Heiden (1984).

[57] Interviews author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and A.J. van der Heiden (1984).

[58] Letter Hoofdkwartier KNIL nr. 6343/F, 4 October 1943 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780); undated memo from LKol B.J. Fiedeldij dated August 1944, referring to the formal establishment of the T.S.M. at Laverton on 1 February 1944 (via B.J. Fiedeldij); interviews author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and A.J. van der Heiden (1984).

[59] Memo from LKol B.J. Fiedeldij dated August 1944 (via B.J. Fiedeldij); interviews author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and A.J. van der Heiden (1984).

[60] Military records D.L. Asjes, M.Sc., A.B. Wolff and C. Bijlsma; interview and correspondence author with C. Bijlsma; interview author with A.J. de Vries (1973); Nota XII/1-46 U, Kantoor Luchtvaartzaken aan Legercommandant, Teruggave vliegtuigen op Lend-Lease, 6 June 1946, Appendices (NIMH, via O.G. Ward). The Nota cites the dates the transport aircraft were received by the ML in Australia or at the RNMFS in the U.S.A. apart from a miswriting, see also the remarks given in [52] and [54]). Kol C. Giebel had followed the 1st phase of B-25 operational training of the RNMFS and was also checked-out on the C-47.

[61] Military records of pilots mentioned; interviews author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and A.J. van der Heiden (1984). W.J. Heikoop was transferred to the P.E.P. in June 1944 for retraining as a fighter pilot.

[62] Ibid. Tlt Daanen (ex 18 Squadron NEI) had originally been a fighter pilot and was seconded to the forming 120 Squadron NEI in November 1943 to take care of reception and introduce the fighter pilots for the unit arriving from the RNMFS. He was transferred back to the transport section in January 1944.

[63] Military records of aviation wireless operators mentioned; interview author with J.H. Rouvroye.

[64] Interview author with A.J. de Vries (1973). Reader is advised that the posting dates given in the military record of S. de Mul do not reflect the actual date of the change-over of command. A.J. de Vries, a fighter pilot of origin, was transferred to the NEI Pool Squadron and became the CO of the Fighter Pool of that unit in March.

[65] Information received from J.J. Nortier (his research on the KNIL in Australia).

[66] Report concerning organisation and provisions for NEI squadrons in Australia, 15 September 1943 (Hoofdkwartier KNIL/DvO, not numbered copy, via B.J. Fiedeldij); Letter DvO Afdeeling C nr. C-62-CA/Air 2-0/37 date 6 March 1944 (via B.J. Fiedeldij); O.G. Ward, P.C. Boer and G.J. Casius, *The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1944* (Afdeling Maritieme Historie van de Marinestaf, 1982), chapters X, XIV; Ward, pp. 331-332 (mistakenly mentions T.S.M. was established at Essendon).

[67] O.G. Ward, P.C. Boer and G.J. Casius, *The Royal Netherlands Military Flying School 1942-1944* (Afdeling Maritieme Historie van de Marinestaf, 1982), chapter XIV.

[68] Interview author with A.J. de Vries (1973). See Appendix 2 for individual aircraft data.

[69] Interviews author with A.J. de Vries (1973), J.H. Rouvroye and A.J. van der Heiden (1984).

[70] Interviews author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and C. Bijlsma.

[71] *Ibid.*; RAAF Historical Section (c. 1977).

[72] Relieved 18 Squadron NEI pilots posted in March-April 1944 included Elt J.S.T. Theunissen, Tlt I.L. Risseeuw, Tlt J. van Bremen, Sgt A.M.B. Engels, Sgt J.H. van Santen, Sgt J. Koedam and Sgt (RNN) J.H. Hofland. Posted during May 1944 were: Elt J.H. Lukkien, Sgt W.J. Holswilder, Sgt W.A. Torn and Sgt W.F. van der Spil and in June-July 1944: Sgt M. Wijler, Sgt J. van der Ende and Sgt C.F. Wardenaar. Aviation wireless operators posted ex 18 Squadron NEI were: Sgts

F.J.H. Zuidwijk, P.J. van Wijk and E. Kerdijk in April, Tlt W.P. Barnaart in May and in July 1944 Sgts R.M. Wirjokoesoemo and R.O. Mahieu. Military records mentioned personnel; see also Sterkte No. 1 NEI Transport Squadron, 1 January 1945 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780).

[73] Memo B.J. Fiedeldij on authorised strength T.S.M. (undated, unnumbered, but approximately May 1944 and *ibid.*, not numbered but dated 1 January 1945, via B.J. Fiedeldij); interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij and A.J. van der Heiden. (The 100-hours maximum was a safety measure which was also used by the RAAF and was very easily reached in practise but closely guarded by the Operations Office of T.S.M.).

[74] *Ibid.*; Letter Hoofdkwartier KNIL/DvO Afdeeling C nr. MC-74-NI-GS/AIR 2-0/86, 7 September 1944 (via O.G. Ward); interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij and L.W. Hansen. According to Fiedeldij he sometimes temporarily upped the authorised strength when temporary postings of personnel were extended and the CO T.S.M./1 N.E.I.T.S. asked for compensation.

[75] Interviews author with J. Staal, A.J. van der Heiden and L.W. Hansen.

[76] Interviews author with A.J. van der Heiden and L.W. Hansen; logbook A.J. van der Heiden.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] Interview author with T. Buehre; military records mentioned personnel.

[79] Military records mentioned personnel; Sterkte No. 1 NEI Transport Squadron, 1 January 1945 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780). Posted in January 1944 already was Sgt E.I. Rookmaker, a RNMFS trained aviation wireless operator who had become a RNMFS radio instructor due to his exceptional performance. He was already following the B-25 OTU when a medical problem surfaced that made him unfit for operational flying. Rookmaker had to be taken off flying in September 1943 and was therefore posted as a radio mechanic.

[80] Interviews author with A.J. de Vries (1973) and B.J. Fiedeldij.

- [81] Ibid.; organizational data received from J.J. Nortier.
- [82] Ward, p. 332; Letter Hoofdkwartier KNIL nr. 1211/NI-10, 2 November 1943 (via O.G. Ward); interviews author with A.J. van der Heiden and L.W. Hansen.
- [83] RAAF record cards B-25s and C-60s (RAAF Historical Section, C-60s ANA, via Gordon Birkett); logbook A.J. van der Heiden. See also Appendix 2.
- [84] Ward, pp. 299-300; interview author with A.J. van der Heiden and logbook A.J. van der Heiden.
- [85] Ward, pp. 299-300; interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij.
- [86] Ward, p. 254; interview author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M.
- [87] Ward, p. 300.
- [88] Operations Record Book 120 Squadron NEI (ANA, copy with NIMH); Report on Operation Potshot 10/20 May 1944, Annexure D No 120 Squadron (NEI) Report on move and stay at Potshot (ANA via Gordon Birkett); interview with M. van Haselen by R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. (1963, via René Wittert van Hoogland). See also Appendix 2 (individual aircraft data). Reader is advised that Ward mixes up local times and Z-times and consequently, wrongly, mentions too high a number of transport aircraft. He does also not mention that one of the transport aircraft became unserviceable on arrival and was not used.
- [89] Military records mentioned persons; interviews author with G. van Messel, T. Buehre and A.J. van der Heiden.
- [90] Military record L.W. Hansen; interview author with L.W. Hansen.
- [91] Operations Record Book 120 Squadron NEI (ANA, copy with NIMH); extracts Dutch monthly reports CO 120 Squadron (via O.G. Ward); interview author with A.J. van der Heiden and his logbook.
- [92] "Reis van Australië naar Nieuw-Guinea in juni-juli 1944 t.b.v. NICA aangelegenheden", verslag van bevindingen van Ltz. G.A. Cox aan BSO, Ceylon (via O.G. Ward); Notes from correspondence of LKoi B.J. Fiedeldij (Afdeeling C Hoofdkwartier KNIL/DvO) June-July 1944 (via B.J.

Fiedeldij); <http://codenames.info/operation/.../>. A guide/interpreter detachment (intelligence detachments that included trained interrogators) consisted of about 18 men to assist the allied front-line troops. Two were assigned to the Hollandia landing operation. After the Hollandia landings KNIL and NICA detachments landed on D-Day with the assault forces instead of with the second landing echelon. In the Hollandia operation the Americans quickly found out they could not talk with anyone to gather intelligence and had no one to take care of the local population. A NICA detachment included a militarised police detachment (usually of some 35 men) and could re-establish civilian rule instantly.

[93] Interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij; NICA operations 1944 (summary received from J.J. Nortier, from his research into the KNIL in Australia 1942-1945).

[94] See <http://codenames.info/operation/.../>.

[95] Information received from J.J. Nortier.

[96] Various correspondence of Hoofdkwartier KNIL/DvO (via B.J. Fiedeldij). Interviews with former T.S.M. pilots and crew members confirmed that the number of 16 was the total of transport aircraft but not all were C-47s and some were probably Australian civilian aircraft and/or civilian operated USAAF aircraft. The NEI War Office departments in Columbia Camp were transferred back to Melbourne during the first half of 1945, probably for a better coordination with Australian military headquarters. During September 1945 the move of Hoofdkwartier KNIL/DvO departments back to Java started.

[97] Letter KNIL/DvO nr. MC-89-CA/Air 2-0/103, 8 September 1944 (via O.G. Ward).

[98] Letter KNIL/DvO nr. MC-32-CA/Air 2-0/69, 16 August 1944 (via O.G. Ward); letter nr. MC-44-ML-C/Air 2-0/71, 17 August 1944 (to Secretary of Air Board, ANA via Gordon Birkett).

[99] Information on the crash received from RAAF Historical Section; Honour List RNLAf. The wreck of ac DT941 was found back in 1989 NW of Mossman (Queensland) in a rainforest.

[100] Dr. L. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, 11A, Nederlands-Indië I, Tweede Helft, pp. 1085-1086; ibid. 11C, Nederlands-Indië, III, p. 246; data received from J.J. Nortier.

[101] <http://codenames.info/operation/.../>; Operations Record Book 120 Squadron NEI (ANA, copy NIMH); extracts Dutch monthly reports CO 120 Squadron (via O.G. Ward).

[102] Military records mentioned personnel.

[103] Military records mentioned pilots; logbook A.J. van der Heiden.

[104] Military record A.F. van Rassel; Stand Personeel Nr. 2 N.E.I.T.S. na overgave als in schrijven nr. 451/V/U ddo.7 November '44 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780); information received from G. van Messel.

[105] Interview author with J.H. Rouvroye. Reader is advised that a part of the radio stations of the Regerings Verbindingsdienst were former RNN stations which were sometimes still called RNN radio station in military records of posted ML personnel.

[106] Monthly strength reports of the KNIL (via J.J. Nortier); interview author with T. Buehre.

[107] Ward, pp. 352-356; interviews author with G. Cooke and A.J. van der Heiden.

[108] Interview author with A.J. van der Heiden and logbook of A.J. van der Heiden.

[109] Cf. [106].

[110] Interviews author with G. van Messel and T. Buehre.

[111] Cf. [97]; Ward, p. 333.

[112] Interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij and G. van Messel.

[113] Cf. [106]; military records mentioned pilots.

[114] "Reis van Australië naar Nieuw-Guinea in juni-juli 1944 t.b.v. NICA aangelegenheden", verslag van bevindingen van Ltz. G.A. Cox aan BSO, Ceylon (via O.G. Ward); interviews author with A.J. van der Heiden, W.J. Holswilder and B.J. Fiedeldij.

[115] Interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij, G. van Messel, J.H. Lukkien and W.J. Holswilder; see also Ward, pp. 314, 316, 332-333.

[116] Interviews author with A.J. van der Heiden and his logbook; monthly reports in Dutch of CO 120 Squadron (extracts via O.G. Ward); Operations Record Book 120 Squadron NEI (ANA, copy with NIMH). One or sometimes two L12As remained based at Essendon up to and including October 1945. After the disbandment of 2 N.E.I.T.S. the aircraft came from 1 N.E.I.T.S./19 (N.E.I.) Squadron and if a second one was needed this usually came from the N.E.I-P.E.P.

[117] Letter KNIL 305/MGS/I-C/Air 2-0/731, 15 May 1945 (ANA, via Gordon Birkett), pt. 4; interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij.

[118] Various correspondence of Hoofdkwartier KNIL/DvO (via B.J. Fiedeldij).

[119] Ibid.; interview author with A.J. de Vries (1973); RAAF record cards TB-25s; logbook A.J. van der Heiden (test pilot at the time).

[120] Stand personeel Nr. 2 N.E.I.T.S. na overgave als in schrijven nr. 451/V/U ddo. 7 November 1944 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780); interview author with G. van Messel (confirmed that the date 7 November 1944 was the formal stand-down date; administrative disbandment date was 15 November 1944).

[121] Interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij; see also Ward, p. 333.

[122] Sterkte No. 1 N.E.I. Transport Squadron 1 Januari 1945 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780); interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij, A.B. Wolff and G. van Messel.

[123] Military records mentioned personnel. Kpl Isaak is (not entirely correct) mentioned in some documents as airgunner. Given relatively large aircrew losses Operations Officer Maj Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. of 18 Squadron NEI had assigned Isaak, although posted as airgunner, as wireless operator in a reserve crew in January 1944. The RNMFS trained Isaak was a graduate from the USAAF radio operator and mechanic (ROM) course at the Sioux Falls Technical Training School but after completing airgunner training (due to medical reasons) had only followed the ground training of the advanced RNMFS course to

become an aviation wireless operator. He did finish a short operational training on the B-25 with 18 Squadron NEI and was to complete his training as aviation wireless operator in Australia when possible. Flying as airgunner in the reserve crew led by Maj D.L. Asjes, M.Sc. (the successor of Wittert van Hoogland) he trained as aviation wireless operator during the flights to and from the target area and on a few training flights. His supervisor was chief wireless operator Adj S. Idsinga who had been one of his instructors with the RNMFS. He formally graduated in March although he kept flying as airgunner on occasion. Isaak also held a bombardier license from the Midland Army Flying School (Bombardier).

[124] Data received from Nico Geldhof; Sterkte No. 1 N.E.I. Transport Squadron 1 Januari 1945 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780).

[125] Sterkte No. 1 N.E.I. Transport Squadron 1 Januari 1945 (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 780).

[126] Ibid.; interviews author with T.H. Gottschalk and J.C.N. van Boldrik.

[127] Interview author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. and his logbook (via Guus van Oorschot). TB-25 N5-180 was written off before 2 August 1945 (Letter 48671 NPC/Captain T.H. Leegstra to Australian Air Mission, Royal Australian Air Force representative, 29 August 1945, ANA). It was possibly damaged by the same (mini) cyclone that hit the Lodestar LT936 in January or early February 1945 at Archerfield and was written off in February 1945.

[128] Interview author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. and his logbook (via Guus van Oorschot).

[129] Monthly KNIL strength reports (NIMH, ML/KNIL inventory nr. 785); interview author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M.

[130] The moment Versteegh took over command of 1 N.E.I.T.S. is not exactly known but was in the second half of April. It has been deduced as late April by comparing signatures in the 1 N.E.I.T.S. correspondence. On 11 April Versteegh visited the squadron and conferred with Maj De Mul, probably about his NIGAT plans. Military records C. Plesman and J.D. Wieringa.

[131] Cf. [129]; interview author with T. Buehre.

[132] Chronologie KNILM in Australië (extracts via G. van Messel); interviews author with G. van Messel and B.J. Fiedeldij; Jan Hagens, Kemajoran, Nederlands-Indisch lucht transport tijdens de roerige jaren 1945-1950 (1993, henceforth Kemajoran), p. 65.

[133] Interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij; letter CO 1 NEITS to ZE de Legercommandant, Melbourne, nr. 272, 12 April 1945 and comments of B.J. Fiedeldij noted on it (via O.G. Ward); see Appendix 2 for individual aircraft data.

[134] Dislocatie, sterkte en operationele overzicht van het K.N.I.L. over de maand Juni 1945; *ibid.* Augustus 1945 (via J.J. Nortier).

[135] Letter A.4.38.01, 30 December 1947, Kol C.W. van der Eem on behalf of CLS to CLN, Appendices (via O.G. Ward); RAAF record card N5-129; interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij.

[136] Letter KNIL nr. 305/MGS/I-C/Air 2-0/731, 15 May 1945 to The Secretary, Department of Air (ANA via Gordon Birkett); Letter Australian Air Board dated 8 June 1945, I was unable to retrieve this letter but it is mentioned in correspondence of LKol B.J. Fiedeldij (approved formation of a NEI Transport Squadron and a Repair and Servicing Unit in 1946, via B.J. Fiedeldij); Letter Department of Air, nr. 151/2/1411 Org 10A, 31 July 1945 (ANA via Gordon Birkett, confirmed the afore mentioned approval); Kemajoran, p. 42; interview author with Ton Gloudemans (one of the war volunteers at the time). The war volunteers with 1 ES were moved to the “advanced course” after a few days as all already had completed a (lower) technical school education in the Netherlands and had some limited experience in a technical profession.

[137] Interviews author with G. van Messel, A.B. Wolff and A.J. van der Heiden; see also Ward, p. 293.

[138] Military records mentioned personnel; Opgave KNILM personeel buiten 1 NEITS (via O.G. Ward).

[139] Letter KNIL nr. 305/MGS/I-C/Air 2-0/731, 15 May 1945 to The Secretary, Department of Air (ANA via Gordon Birkett).

[140] Ibid.; Squadron P18 Form, 20 April 1945 (ANA, RAAF, Formation, Organisation and Movement Number 19 (NEI) Transport Squadron); interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij.

[141] Dislocatie, sterkte en operationele overzicht van het KNIL over de maand Augustus 1945 (via J.J. Nortier); Letter Australian Air Board dated 8 June 1945 which is mentioned in correspondence of LKol B.J. Fiedeldij (this letter approved formation of a NEI Transport Squadron and a Repair and Servicing Unit in 1946, via B.J. Fiedeldij); Letter Department of Air, nr. 151/2/1411 Org 10A, 31 July 1945 (ANA, via Gordon Birkett, confirmed the afore mentioned approval).

[142] Interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij; Kemajoran, pp. 62-63 (running the trade at Biak was flight engineer SM C. Kop, formerly KNILM).

[143] Ibid, p. 17; interview author with G. van Messel.

[144] O.G. Ward with W.J.A.M. de Kock, M. Onnen and R. van Wijngaarden, *De Militaire Luchtvaart KNIL in de na-oorlogse jaren 1945-1950* (1988, hereafter *Ward 1945-1950*), pp. 9-10; information on 31 Transport Squadron RAF received from AHB RAF; see also *Ward 1945-1950*, p. 75.

[145] Vic Flintham, *High Stakes, Britain's Air Arms in Action 1945-1990* (2009, hereafter *High Stakes*), pp. 25-28.

[146] RAAF and NEI strength 18 and 120 Squadron NEI, 1 May 1943-31 December 1945 (RAAF and NEI personnel strength figures), undated un-numbered summary of squadron monthly reports (via O.G. Ward, 1984); *Ward 1945-1950*, pp. 46-49, 71-74; *Mededelingen aan luchtvaarders nr. 1, KNIL/DvO Afdeeling C*, 16 October 1945 (via O.G. Ward); dated NIGIS photograph of final B-25 with personnel that left Canberra for Bundaberg.

[147] *Ward 1945-1950*, pp. 35-36, 38; Dick Asjes, *Startklaar* (1985, hereafter *Asjes*), p. 107; René Wittert, *Het Vergeten Squadron* (1976), pp. 470-492; logbook R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. (via Guus van Oorschot); interview author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. Reader is advised that *Ward 1945-1950*, p. 36 mentions correctly that on 11 September two TB-25s arrived at Singapore but incorrectly suggests these were two of the five TB-25s of

the “Wittert group”. The second TB-25 was aircraft N5-129 with Captain Arens (the sixth TB-25). On p.38 it is incorrectly mentioned that this TB-25 was armed.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Ibid.; Kemajoran, pp. 34-35.

[151] Logbook R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. (via Guus van Oorschot); interview author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M.

[152] Interviews author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. and G. van Messel; Dr. L. de Jong, Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog (1986, hereafter De Jong), Volume 11C Nederlands Indië, III, pp. 413-415.

[153] Interviews author with G. van Messel and T. Buehre; Ward 1945-1950, pp. 45-50.

[154] Ibid.; information on MLD routes received from Nico Geldhof.

[155] Interviews author with R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M. and G. van Messel; Ward 1945-1950, pp. 48-49; De Jong, p. 627.

[156] Ibid. and logbook Wittert van Hoogland (via Guus van Oorschot).

[157] Ibid.; Kemajoran, p. 44.

[158] Interview author with G. van Messel; Kemajoran, p. 44.

[159] Asjes, p. 118; interview author with D.L. Asjes, M.Sc.; De Jong, p. 415; Mededelingen van de Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis Landmachtstaf, Volume 8 (1985), pp. 158-159.

[160] 4^e Kwartaalrapport, nr. 258, 30 December 1945 (Directeur KNILM aan Raad van Bestuur KNILM te New York, via O.G. Ward, 1984); Kemajoran, p. 91.

[161] Ibid. Reader is advised that in Kemajoran, p. 91, the 4th Quarter figures are wrongly mentioned as the 1945-figures.

[162] Operations Record Books 18 Squadron NEI and 2 Squadron RAAF (ANA, copy of 18 Squadron ORB with NIMH); Ward 1945-1950, pp. 45-50, 164.

[163] Interviews author with A.J. van der Heiden and B.J. Fiedeldij; logbook A.J. van der Heiden. See Appendix 3 for details on individual aircraft used.

[164] Ibid.; Ward 1945-1950, pp. 45-52 (with additions and some corrections by Herman Arens via O.G. Ward).

[165] Interviews author with A.J. van der Heiden, B.J. Fiedeldij, D.T. de Bont and P.A. Hoijer.

[166] Interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij and his military record; military record J.J. Zomer; interviews author with A.J. van der Heiden and P.A. Hoijer.

[167] Interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij and A.J. van der Heiden; Asjes, p. 118.

[168] Information received from Herman Arens via O.G. Ward; information concerning NICA and AMACAB (1945-1946) received from J.J. Nortier.

[169] Information received from Herman Arens via O.G. Ward; Kemajoran, pp. 92, 98.

[170] Information received from Herman Arens via O.G. Ward.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Interview author with G. van Messel; Kemajoran, pp. 97-98.

[173] Information received from G.J. Casius (his correspondence with W.C.J. Versteegh c. 1959).

[174] Interviews author with B.J. Fiedeldij and G. van Messel; Kemajoran, pp. 67, 104. The C-117A had a different electrical and hydraulics system compared to the C-47A/B and often was quite a headache to the technicians maintaining the aircraft.

[175] Conform a description by B.J. Fiedeldij; see also Kemajoran, pp. 93, 111.

[176] Ibid.; interview author with G. van Messel. Around this time the Commando LSK was renamed Commando Luchtstrijdkrachten Leger (CLL, Army Air Forces Command).

[177] E-mail correspondence author with Jan Hagens, November-December 2017. A study of military records of ML pilots, aviation wireless operators and mechanics showed that ML personnel not being former KNILM/KLM totalled at least 80% of the personnel establishment. Former KNILM/KLM personnel did hold the key positions in the squadron, though. Reader is advised that personnel working for the Kemajoran airfield organization (platform services including air traffic control and communications) were ML personnel in 1946-47. Only in 1948 the Department of Public Works took over with civil servants. The original c. 25 war volunteers ex 1 ES with 19 (NEI) Sq were followed later in September 1945 by c. five more experienced (in a civilian technical profession) war volunteers who had received a transition training with the P.E.P. as aircraft mechanic.

[178] Military records ML pilots 19 Squadron.

[179] Interview author with B.J. Fiedeldij; Kemajoran, pp. 109-110.

[180] Kemajoran, p. 111.

[181] Ibid., p. 114.

[182] Dislocatie NEI luchtstrijdkrachten 4 Maart 1946 (Appendix of Letter CLG nr. 805-GSI. C, 11 Maart 1946, via O.G. Ward, 1984); Dislocatie NEI Luchtstrijdkrachten 17 Juni 1946 and ibid. 1 Juli 1946 (via O.G. Ward, 1984) and Dislocatie Luchtstrijdkrachten stand 1 September 1946 (Appendix of Letter 330/01.02.02/ML-SOA, 1 September 1946, via O.G. Ward, 1984). The crash of ac DT948 was reported to 19 (NEI) Squadron in Australia by telegram on 29 May. Information about the accident with details on damage sustained and crash date (confirmation that the telegram date of 29 May was the actual crash date) received from R. Timmermans, at the time aviation wireless operator with 19 (NEI) Squadron. He arrived with another aircraft shortly after the incident. The cause of the accident probably was the wet condition of the runway.

[183] Information received from G. van Messel and R.W.C.G.A. Wittert van Hoogland Esq, LL.M.; see also Gerard Casius/Thijs Postma, 40 Jaar Luchtvaart in Indië (1986, hereafter Casius), p. 129.

[184] Dislocatie NEI Luchtstrijdkrachten 1 November 1946 (via O.G. Ward, 1984); Maandelijkse nieuwsbrief 19e Squadron, April 1946 and ibid. August 1946 (via G. van Messel); information on the C-54s received from G. van Messel; see also Nico Geldhof, “De Douglas C-54 Skymasters van het NIGAT” in Luchtvaart 99-4, Jaargang 48 (lists crew composition and arrival dates first two C-54s at Archerfield).

[185] E-mail correspondence author with Jan Hagens, 8 January 2018; information received from G. van Messel; photographs of the first two C-54s made at Amberley, Brisbane in August 1946 and photographs of C-54s made at Kemajoran in October 1946; Dislocatie NEI Luchtstrijdkrachten 8 October 1946 and ibid. 1 November 1946 (via O.G. Ward, 1984). The C-54s were never listed on the Dislocatie NEI Luchtstrijdkrachten strength reports of the ML. LKol B.J. Fiedeldij noted on the 1 November strength report “nu KNILM tbv NIGAT” (presently KNILM on behalf of NIGAT).

[186] Maandelijkse nieuwsbrief 19e Squadron, May 1946 (via G. van Messel); information received from G. van Messel; Kemajoran, p. 96.

[187] Information received from B.J. Fiedeldij and G. van Messel; information received from Gerard Casius (from his correspondence with W.C.J. Versteegh c. 1959, most of the Australian civilians ground technicians left after their first year in Batavia); e-mail Jan Hagens to author, 24 December 2017; see also Casius, p. 129 and Kemajoran, pp. 109, 111.

[188] Vic Flintham, High Stakes, British Air Arms in Action 1945-1990 (2009), pp. 25-28. The high numbers of freight transported were caused by the high number of sorties flown between Batavia and Bandoeng with food and fuel in air lift style. Necessary, as the city of Bandoeng was completely surrounded by Indonesian nationalist troops and could only be supplied via the air.

[189] Ward 1945-1950, p. 207 (wrongly mentions 30 November as the date 31 Squadron left Java); Casius, p. 128; information received from J.H. Lukkien; information received from Herman Arens (via O.G. Ward).

[190] Casius, p. 129; information received from Gerard Casius (from his correspondence with W.C.J. Versteegh, c. 1959); Kemajoran, p. 140; information received from B.J. Fiedeldij.

[191] Information received from Historical Section RAAF; information received from G. van Messel; Kemajoran, pp. 138-140. It would take until April-May 1947 before Kemajoran was ready, the post-war contract with ANA was ended and the last groups of personnel were transferred to Batavia apart from the personnel of a small Booking Office which lasted until September 1947. In May 1947 the financial burden for the NEI Government which had had a hard time furnishing the necessary foreign currency for the operations in Australia of the squadron finally ended.

[192] Interview author with R. Timmermans and military record R. Timmermans; Kemajoran, pp. 103, 115, 118-119, 138 (gives the definitive routes as they had developed by late 1946); Casius, p. 129.

[193] Information received from B.J. Fiedeldij, J.H. Lukkien, B. Hulscher, Herman Arens (via O.G. Ward) and G. van Messel; Kemajoran, pp. 152-154, 156-157.

[194] Casius, p. 129; Brochure nr. 16, 22 October 1946 (via O.G. Ward, 1984, gives the 1946 figures up to 1 October, I have added the October 1946 figures); see also Ward 1945-1950, p. 209.

[195] See [182] for information about the crash of DT948.

[196] E-mail from Jan Hagens to author, 24 December 2017. Ground echelon strength is my best estimate based on information I received from G. van Messel, B.J. Fiedeldij and B. Hulscher (the first CO of 20 Squadron who visited 19 Squadron for the transfer of four C-47s and to make arrangements for inspections of these aircraft at Kemajoran).

Abbreviations

AAF Allied Air Forces

AASC Australian Army Service Corps
Ac Aircraft
AD Aircraft Depot
Adj Adjutant (Adjutant)
AHB Air Historical Branch
AMACAB Allied Military Administration Civil Affairs Branch
ANA Australian National Airways or Australian National Archives
A&P Aircraft and Personnel Pool
ATC Air Transport Command
BPM Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij (Batavian Oil Company)
BG Bombardment Group
BSO Bevelhebber Strijdkrachten Oosten (Commander -Netherlands-Eastern Forces)
C Commandant (CO) or Circa (approximately)
CAC Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation
C-in-C Commander in Chief
CG Commanding General
CO Commanding Officer
DAT Directorate of Air Transport
DC Douglas Chicago (production plant)
Det Detachment
DK Douglas Oklahoma (production plant)
DL Douglas Long Beach (production plant)
DLV Directoraat Luchtvervoer (Directorate of Air Transport)
DvO Departement van Oorlog (NEI War Office)

Elt Eerste Luitenant (1st Lieutenant)
FLC Foreign Liquidation Commission
FY Fiscal Year
Gen Maj Generaal-majoor (Major-General)
GHQ General Headquarters
Inf Infanterie (Infantry)
Kap Kapitein (Captain)
KLM Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij (Royal Dutch Airline)
KLTZ Kapitein-luitenant-ter-zee (Commander)
KNIL Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger (Royal NEI Army)
KNILM Koninklijke Nederlands-Indische Luchtvaart Maatschappij (Royal Netherlands Indies Airline)
Kol Kolonel (Colonel)
Kpl Korporaal (Corporal)
LKol Luitenant-Kolonel (Lieutenant-Colonel)
LSK Luchtstrijdkrachten (Air Forces)
Lt Gen Luitenant-generaal (Lieutenant-General)
LTZ I Luitenant-ter-zee der 1^e klasse (Lieutenant-Commander).
Maj Majoor (Major)
MajGen Major General
ML Militaire Luchtvaart (Army Aviation Corps)
Mod Modification [center]
NAA North American Aviation
NCO Non-commissioned Officer
NEFIS Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service

NEI Netherlands East Indies
NEITS NEI Transport Squadron
NGAT Netherlands Government Air Transport
NICA Netherlands Indies Civil Administration
NIGAT Netherlands Indies Government Air Transport
NIGIEO Netherlands Indies Government Import and Export Organization
NIMH Netherlands Institute of Military History
NPC Netherlands Purchasing Commission
Ops Operations
ORB Operations Record Book
Ovl III Officier-vlieger 3e klasse (Officer pilot 3rd class=junior Lieutenant)
PEP Personnel and Equipment Pool
PSP Perforated Steel Planking (Plate)
RAF Royal Air Force
RAAF Royal Australian Air Force
RAPWI Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees
Rep Reported
RI Regiment Infanterie (Infantry Regiment)
RNMFS Royal Netherlands Military Flying School
RNN Royal Netherlands Navy
RSU Repair and Servicing Unit
SAD Sacramento Air Depot
SEAC South East Asia Command
SFTS Service Flying Training School

Sgt Sergeant
SM Sergeant-Major (Flight Sergeant)
SONICA Senior Officer NICA
SWPA South West Pacific Area
TA Transport Afdeeling (Transport Unit)
TCG Troop Carrier Group
TCS Troop Carrier Squadron
TSM Transport Section Melbourne
Olt Onderluitenant (Sub Lieutenant)
PoW Prisoner of War
Tlt Tweede Luitenant (2nd Lieutenant)
U/S Unserviceable
USAAF United States Army Air Force
Vdg Vaandrig (Ensign, cadet reserve officer candidate)
VRA Vliegtuig Reparatie Afdeeling (Aircraft Repair Depot)
VTG Vliegtuig Transport Groep (Aircraft Transport Group)
W.O. written off

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