



MINISTER FOR AIR.

Victoria Barracks,
MELBOURNE, S.C.1.

CONFIDENTIAL

57 JUL 1947

My dear Prime Minister,

TRANSFER OF NO. 19 (DUTCH) SQUADRON FROM
ARCHERFIELD TO NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES.

Following on your telephone call this morning on the above-mentioned matter, I thought you may be interested to have the following information as a background in your proposed talk with the Dutch Minister.

2. All Dutch Squadrons have been withdrawn from Australia with the exception of No. 19 (Transport) Squadron. That unit was formed at Archerfield in August, 1945, in order that the various Dutch transport aircraft could be grouped into one organisation for the purposes of administration and operational control. The squadron uses Air Force accommodation but, apart from that, no other services are supplied by the R.A.A.F. The squadron is maintaining communications between Batavia and Brisbane and is operating with Dutch civil markings.

3. Our Air Force authorities have discussed from time to time with the Dutch Army Liaison authorities here the question of transfer of the squadron to Java, but nothing of a definite character in that connection has developed notwithstanding that the earlier promises were that the squadron would be moved to Java early this year.

4. On the 21st April last my Department requested the Department of External Affairs to take up that question with the Royal Netherlands Legation at Canberra which replied on the 6th June to the effect that the final transport of the squadron would depend upon the possibilities of shipping, that it is expected that, if shipping space becomes available shortly, the transfer will be completed at the end of August next and that operations of the unit will, pending the withdrawal, be subject to the administrative control of the Royal Australian Air Force.

5. In the last-mentioned connection, owing to the nature of the operations of that squadron, it is impossible for the R.A.A.F. to exercise any real administrative control over that unit which is operating more in the nature of a civil airline between Australia and the Netherlands East Indies. The view is thus taken that its continued presence in Australia should be clarified on a Government level and that a firm date for the withdrawal of the squadron to N.E.I. should be established.

6. I might here add, in confidence, that, as far back as October, 1946, the A.O.C., Eastern Area, advised R.A.A.F. Headquarters to the effect that No. 19 Squadron appeared to

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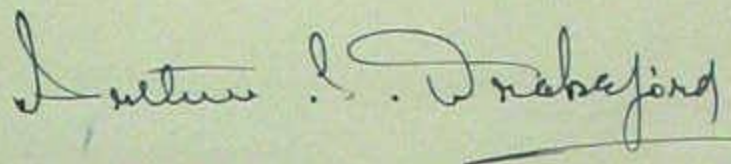
The Rt. Hon. J.B. Chifley, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

2.

be throwing off its Service cloak and was emerging as part of the K.N.I.L.M. organisation (a well-known civil airline) having regard to its current activities.

7. I shall, of course, be glad to hear the outcome of your discussions with the Dutch Minister.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Arthur S. Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

(Arthur S. Drakeford)

P

9th July, 1947.

My dear Minister,

I have your letter of 7th July advising me in regard to the transfer of No. 19 (Dutch) Squadron from Archerfield to Netherlands East Indies and thank you for the information contained therein.

I shall advise you in due course of the result of any discussions I may have with the Dutch Minister.

Yours sincerely,

(J. B. CHIFLEY)
PRIME MINISTER.

The Hon. A. S. Drakeford, M.P.,
Minister for Air,
Victoria Barracks,
MELBOURNE. S.C.1.

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The Rt. Hon. J.B. Chifley, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.



26 JUL 1947

MINISTER FOR AIR.

Victoria Barracks,
MELBOURNE, S.C.1.

22 JUL 1947

My dear Prime Minister,

I refer to your letter of the 9th July and to mine of the 7th July regarding the question of transfer of No. 19 Dutch (Transport) Squadron from Archerfield to the Netherlands East Indies.

2. When in Brisbane last Wednesday, I inspected the R.A.A.F. components at Archerfield and took the opportunity whilst there of discussing with Messrs. Schneiders and Lischer (of the Dutch Squadron) the question of its vacation of certain buildings at that airport.

3. Mr. Schneiders then intimated that, while the target date of the squadron's vacation of Archerfield was the 15th July, those arrangements could not be adhered to owing to the late arrival of the Dutch vessel "Tjibesar". He intimated that that vessel (a 12,000 ton ship) was still loading at Melbourne and that, when its loadings there are completed, the "Tjibesar" will proceed to Pinkenba to "pick up" all of the equipment, etc., belonging to the Dutch Squadron at Archerfield and that that squadron will wholly vacate the buildings at present held by it within fourteen days of the vessel leaving Pinkenba.

4. My Department is now in touch with the Department of Supply and Shipping with a view to ascertaining the reasons for the delay of the vessel "Tjibesar" at Melbourne, and further, whether any and if so what action can be taken to facilitate its early departure to Pinkenba for the purposes referred to in preceding paragraph.

5. I might add that, whilst at Archerfield, I ascertained that, since the 1st June, 24 Dutch aircraft arrivals there from the Netherlands East Indies had been recorded. Actually, one arrived on the date of my inspection, the passenger list comprising several civilians.

6. I shall be glad if you will advise me of the result of any discussion you may have with the Dutch Minister and I will keep you informed of any other developments as become known to me.

Yours sincerely,

(Arthur S. Drakeford)

The Rt. Hon. J.B. Chifley, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Parliament House,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

31st July, 1947.

My dear Minister,

I desire to acknowledge your letter of the 22nd having reference to the transfer of No. 19 Dutch (Transport) Squadron from Archerfield to the Netherlands East Indies.

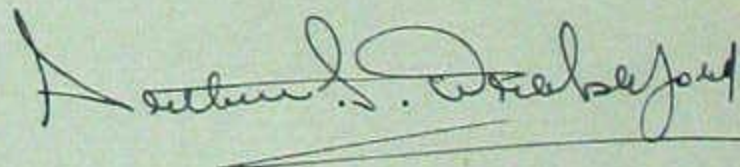
It would appear as a result of later developments that it is not likely that it will be possible to get the "Tjibesar" to Brisbane to pick this Squadron up, and in the meantime it would appear that little can be done to shift the Squadron's equipment out. I will discuss the matter with you when you come to Canberra.

Yours sincerely,

(J. B. Chifley)

The Hon. A. S. Drakeford, M.P.,
Minister for Air,
Victoria Barracks,
MELBOURNE, S.C.I.

Yours sincerely,



(Arthur S. Drakeford)

The Rt. Hon. J.B. Chifley, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
Parliament House,
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Parliament House,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

MINUTE PAPER.

(This side only to be written on.)

C.11814/39.

SUBJECT :

DUTCH AIRCRAFT.

MINISTER:

The position that now appears to require decision having regard to the advices contained in my minute (copy attached) of 3rd September, 1947, is as under :-

- (a) Is the Minister for Customs agreeable to lifting the embargo on Dutch Aircraft to permit four machines to come to Australia to lift the remaining N.E.I. personnel and equipment. If not, will permission be given for the Dutch to charter Australian Aircraft for those purposes.

As indicated in my previous minute, the Dutch Authorities have adequate quantities of petrol and oil for the four flights as well as personnel to refuel the aircrafts.

No Australian Assistance will, therefore, be required other than the lifting of the embargo for additional aircraft flights.

For your information I am attaching copy of advice received by Teleprinter from the Department of External Affairs on the 26th August, 1947.

In view of the representations received from the Dutch Minister the question of lifting the embargo should be discussed with the Minister for Customs.

No other official representations have been made to us in this matter nor has any question been raised with us since my minute dated 3rd September, 1947.

I have spoken to Mr. Amos in Brisbane today and he informs me that the Dutch have considerable quantities of stores at the Pinkenbah Wharf awaiting shipment to Java.

However, the stores which are to be carried away by aircraft are at present located in one Igloo Hangar. All of the other hangars, formerly used by the Dutch, have now been returned. They have finished their operations at Archerfield and are awaiting the outcome of their Government's approach to our Government. There are still a few Dutch personnel at Archerfield looking after the stores which, as previously mentioned, could be lifted with the four aircraft required.

W. C. Langford
SECRETARY.

17/9/1947.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE.

MINUTE PAPER.

(This side only to be written on.)

C.11814/39.

SUBJECT :

DUTCH AIRCRAFT.

Following upon the outbreak of hostilities between the Dutch and Indonesians the Queensland Trades and Labour Council requested that the landing and servicing of Dutch aeroplanes in Australia be stopped. In reply to this request advice was forwarded to the Secretary, Mr. Healy, that arrangements were well in hand for the transfer of No. 19 Dutch (Transport) Squadron from Archerfield to the Netherlands East Indies and it was likely that the Squadron's equipment would be shipped from Archerfield at a very early date and asking that no opposition be made to this move.

As a result of later developments the Squadron's equipment was not loaded on board the Dutch Freighter TJIBESAR which had proceeded to Brisbane for this purpose.

The A.C.T.U. and all affiliated Unions excepting the A.W.U. subsequently placed a ban on the refueling of Dutch aircraft.

On the 25th August the Royal Netherlands Legation forwarded a note to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs as follows :-

"According to information received from the Commanding Officer 19th Transport Squadron Royal Netherlands Indies Army Air Force, the Royal Australian Air Force at Amberley (Brisbane) has received instructions from the Director of Supply and Equipment of Air Board, Group Captain Acton, at Melbourne not to refuel the aircraft of the 19th Squadron.

"It has also been indicated that the Royal Australian Air Force at Darwin (N.T.) will receive similar instructions. Furthermore the Shell Company of Australia Pty. Ltd. has informed the Commanding Officer 19th Squadron that they will not be able to supply 19th Squadron with drums of aviation spirit and oil, as a consequence of threats allegedly made by certain Australian Trade Unions.

"The Government of the Netherlands Indies regrets the extremely un-compromising attitude taken by the Royal Australian Air Force - an attitude which strongly contrasts with the hospitality and co-operation previously shown by the Royal Australian Air Force.

"Pursuant to instructions which have been received the Legation desires to draw the earnest attention of the Department to the fact that the Royal Australian Air Force still enjoys the hospitality and full co-operation of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army Air Force at Morotai (Netherlands Indies). In this connection it is strongly felt that both services rendered by the R.A.A.F. on Australian territory and by the R.N.I.A.A.F. in Netherlands Indies Territory are a consequence of the former allied co-operation which should not be unilaterally disrupted by one of the parties.

"In view of the above the Legation has been directed to request the Department that the necessary steps be taken in order to provide the 19th Squadron with the desired

/facilities

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
2.
MINUTE PAPER.
facilities on Australian Territory.

"The Legation avails itself of this opportunity to state that eight to nine flights are still contemplated to carry materials of the Squadron, at present in Australia, as well as the personnel of said Squadron to the Netherlands Indies.

"A reply at the earliest possible convenience of the Department will be greatly appreciated."

The Department of Air have indicated it is quite true that the Dutch authorities have co-operated fully in permitting establishment of a R.A.A.F. Staging Base at Morotai for our courier service between Australia and Japan. Without that base, R.A.A.F. Dakotas could not operate that service.

Inquiries have been made to ascertain the number of planes being refuelled by the Dutch and the type and amount of material which they propose to transport by plane. The freight to be carried is understood to consist of Twenty-five thousand pounds of equipment, mostly aircraft parts, and a limited quantity of medical supplies.

The number of aircraft varies from time to time but it is understood that aircraft arrive and depart fairly constantly.

Supplies of petrol which the Dutch had at Archerfield are said to be almost completely exhausted although it is believed they have some supplies located Cloncurry. The present practice appears to be for the aircraft to refuel at Cloncurry and then fly to Brisbane and return before again refuelling. It would be possible, therefore, for the Dutch aircraft to fly from Cloncurry to Darwin and on to N.E.I.

Members of the Transport Workers' Union are mainly responsible for the refuelling operations at Cloncurry and this Union is affiliated with the A.W.U.

No other official representations have been made to us in this matter and no question been raised with us since my minute dated 3rd September, 1947.

I have spoken to Mr. Smos in Brisbane today and he has said that the Dutch have considerable quantities of stores at Canberra, and are awaiting shipment to Java.

3rd September, 1947.

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PRIME MINISTER.

CANBERRA.

For Mr Drakeford

I have discussed
with Ministry for
Customs - matter of more
Dutch aircraft coming
in to load at Brisbane
He has decided to
class them as "Public
Vessels" and that
will allow them to come
in without Customs clearance
as Burton will however
keep Mr Tepperma and tell
him to refuse them to land
Mr says
I think to it

AIR FORCE.

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the Queensland Trades and
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the Secretary, Mr. Healy,
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request the Department that the necessary steps be taken in
order to provide the 19th Squadron with the desired

/facilities

Parliament House,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.
20th September, 1947.

My dear Prime Minister,

Following your inquiry I have now had inquiries made regarding operations of the aircraft service operated by the 19th Transport Squadron, Netherlands Indies Air Forces.

I understand that no embargo has been imposed by the Department of Trade and Customs on Dutch aircraft. The concern of the Department is simply to ensure with regard to any overseas aircraft visiting Australia that Customs requirements are complied with.

Aircraft of the 19th Transport Squadron Royal Netherlands Indies Army Airforce have up to the present, on their visits to Australia, been regarded for Customs purposes as "public vessels" in the services of a foreign Government. As such, they have been exempted from all Customs formalities.

Recently, some of the Service personnel manning the aircraft have been replaced by civilians, and the question arose with the Customs Department as to whether, in view of this, the aircraft should lose their status as public vessels.

I have agreed that the concession of status as "public vessels" be extended to all aircraft of this Dutch Squadron during the time they are engaged on the removal overseas of Dutch personnel and equipment now held in Queensland, regardless of whether or not they are manned by Service personnel or civilians.

Yours sincerely,

(Ben Courtice).

The Rt. Hon. J.B. Chifley, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA.

Mr. Kennedy,

Copy for your information. It is noted that the Prime Minister has agreed that the above concession be extended to four aircraft only.
L.R. 22/9.

Pursuant to instructions which have been received the Legation desires to draw the earnest attention of the Department to the fact that the Royal Australian Air Force still enjoys the hospitality and full co-operation of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army Air Force at Morotai (Netherlands Indies). In this connection it is strongly felt that both services rendered by the R.A.A.F. on Australian territory and by the R.N.I.A.A.F. in Netherlands Indies Territory are a consequence of the former allied co-operation which should not be unilaterally disrupted by one of the parties.

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