MEMO

DATE:16 June 1995

TO: Director
     National Archives
     WELLINGTON
FROM: [name removed]
     Regional Archivist, Christchurch

REF: CHJ94004

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│   PROPOSED RECORDS DISPOSAL      │
│           SCHEDULE               │
│    ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR         │
│            FORCE                 │
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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE
AIR STAFF; BASE HEADQUARTERS, TRAINING AND OPERATIONS UNITS.

ARCHIVIST -   [name removed]

DEPARTMENTAL CONTACTS -   [name removed]
                                    Registrar
                                    NZ Defence Force HQ
                                    Flt Sgt I Wilson
                                    Support Group
                                    Headquarters

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The aim of this schedule is to identify records
     according to value and allow their disposal with the
     minimum amount of administrative work consistent
     with the requirements of the Archives Act and the
     RNZAF's own administrative needs. The objective of
     the schedule is to facilitate proper records
     management practices within the RNZAF and ensure
     that the functions and activities of the Air Force
     are documented and preserved. Unlike the Army
     schedules, which were confined to Command
     Headquarters and below, this schedule aims to be
     inclusive, and eventually cover ALL public records
     created by the RNZAF. At present, some non-SDFS
     (Standard Defence Filing System) records systems as
     well as a number of units, have been temporarily
     excluded. The schedule was supposed to cover Group
     level (Support and Operations) but has taken so long
     to develop that these agencies are soon to disappear
     and be replaced by Air Command. The schedule was
     drafted on the premise that this level was to be

included, however, and work done on the schedule will be used to appraise the records of these agencies on their demise, and will form the basis for an addition to the schedule covering Air Command after it has been in operation for some time. Apart from those and a few other small units, however, the schedule covers Air Staff records, and Base and Unit records.

1.2 National Archives was approached by the RNZAF to develop a disposal schedule several years ago, but although some preliminary work was undertaken the project lapsed [has been removed]. The request for the schedule came from the Records Officer at Defence Headquarters. In 1988 [name removed], the Records Disposal Officer, came down to Christchurch, and we spent nearly a week visiting the units based in Wigram. I also made several follow up visits to particular units. After [name removed] left, the momentum went out of the project from the Defence end and the Army schedule was given priority. During the same time I undertook a number of appraisals on several of the units. After it was decided to extend the scope of the schedule, the Air Force flew me to Auckland, where I spent a day at Whenuapai with [name removed] Regional Archivist, Auckland looking at Operations Group HQ and unit filing systems. We were approached again late last year and it was agreed that Defence would pay the cost [removed]. A preliminary meeting was held in NZDF HQ in November, attended by [name removed], the Defence Registrar, [name removed], and [name removed] from Air Staff and [name removed] the Defence Historian. NA was represented by [name removed] and me. This meeting set out the expectations of the project and how it was to be carried out, and discussed a number of assumptions presented by NA (see appendix). The first part of the project was delayed until the new year. I spent a number of days in early February in NZDF HQ at the Air Staff registry. [name removed] and I then visited Whenuapai on 7-8 March accompanied by [name removed]. We looked at Operations Group HQ, Base HQ, and a number of units, before going to Ohakea on 9-10 March to look at Base records and Works and engineering records as well as a number of flying units. On 5 April we visited Woodbourne, to look at training schools, and on 7 April we looked at Support Group HQ in Wigram. We had already looked closely at Base Wigram and Support Group HQ files in two appraisal jobs the previous October (CHJ93012, CHJ93013).The draft recommendations were sent to NZDF HQ on 13 May. These were originally intended to have a wide distribution to invite comment but in fact they were

only distributed to [names removed] and the head of the Museum, [name removed]. A meeting was held in Wellington on 29 July, where the draft was discussed. There was general agreement about the content and direction of the recommendations and so I incorporated some minor suggested amendments and sent it back to [name removed] for wider distribution. It was felt to essential that the schedule had the widest possible acceptance at each stage, so that the Air Force itself took 'ownership' of the recommendations. The response from the units was very slow in coming and not very extensive. The schedule was re-drafted to include the disposal periods and change the format and a further and final meeting was held in Wellington on 6 April 1995, attended by [name removed] and myself, as well as [names removed]. The Museum was also invited but felt that it was happy enough with the schedule and provided a letter to confirm this (see appendix). The meeting agreed to the proposed schedule with minor changes and agreed on procedures for the implementation of the schedule and for continuing training of Air Force personnel.

1.3   There is inevitably a great deal of similarity between the recommendations of this schedule and that of the Army. This is not merely a matter of looks - because both services use the same filing system - but of content, because many of the functions are similar. The major difference lies in the technical nature of a lot of the files and the greater importance these have compared to similar Army files. Files containing technical information about aeroplanes are central to the Air Force in a way that files about Army vehicles are not to the Army, except perhaps for files about tanks in armoured units. Throughout the Air Force, at all levels, there is a stratum of technical records demanding special attention from any appraisal. The questions of what should be kept and who should keep it are out of my competence, and I have had to rely heavily on advice from Defence, notably from the RNZAF Museum and Technical Officers, and build this continuing advice into the schedule. [personal comments have been removed]

1.4   As you are aware, a records disposal schedule is not best suited to deal with large and varied filing systems such as the SDFS. Furthermore the current systems are fluid and evolving: new files are being created constantly and the apparent uniformity of the classification system hides much variation in practise between offices and layers in the

hierarchy. The imminent organisational changes will also profoundly affect the content of file systems at a number of levels and necessitate a review of the schedule next year. The draft schedule and its proposed procedures take these factors into account. It is proposed that when a unit 'sentences' records under the schedule the resulting lists are sent first to specialist offices in the units and then to Defence HQ where Air Staff and the RNZAF Museum representatives will look at the proposals to see if they fit with the schedule. The list will then go to Defence and the Defence Registrar and Defence Historian will review the list and the RNZAF's comments. At this stage the Museum will have had a chance to put in a claim for those records recommended for destruction, and justification made for disposal decisions differing from those approved under the schedule (it is envisaged that some simple form might be used to cover these cases). The annotated list will then be forwarded to National Archives for comment. We might, for example, wish to keep some of the material claimed by the Museum if it is of general value. This process provides a safety backstop to the schedule and allows us to make improvements based on actual use. It also allows us to keep a check on what material is going to the Museum. It is proposed that any material going to the Museum should be marked in some way.

1.5   Time in Agencies: 24 hours.
      Other time on project: 50 hours.

      Amount appraised: 230 metres.

      Appraisal charge: [has been removed]

      Proportion of agency's records covered by schedule:
      All publications; all photographs, video and
      film; 95% of SDFS registered files; all unit
      histories.

2.   **ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY**

2.1   I have not attempted to provide an administrative history of the Air Force although I have included an agency documentation for a Group HQ and a Base. A Defence publication, NZAP 3184 - chapter two: 'Organisation of the RNZAF', provides a current organisational breakdown. Until recently Air Staff orders were channelled through two Group HQs to individual units and Bases. The RNZAF, along with the Army, is in the process of concentrating its resources within the triangle of Auckland, Waiouru

and Ohakea, with an outlier at Woodbourne. At the moment the two groups are being amalgamated to form Air Command based at Whenuapai. Wigram will close at the end of the year and ground training concentrated at Woodbourne.

2.2   The schedule originally was meant to cover each of the following agencies (all of which were inspected):

Air Staff, NZDF HQ

Operations Group HQ

Support Group HQ

RNZAF Bases: Auckland, Ohakea, Woodbourne and Wigram

Units: operational flying squadrons; training schools; technical units; works and supply units; base administration units

Units exclude at this stage include the RNZAF Museum (Wigram and Ohakea), Command Training School, Command and Staff College, DEMU, recruiting offices.

3.   RECORDS COVERED BY THE SCHEDULE

3.1   The schedule covers the registered file system of each of the following agencies: Air Staff HQ, all Base HQ and Units. It does not at present cover the Staff College, RNZAF Museum,or Medical Units. As well as the registered file system, it also covers publications (including technical publications, newsletters, standing orders etc), unit histories, photographs, film and videos,and plans. Personal files come under the control of Defence, rather than RNZAF and these are kept by Base Records and transferred to NA. A number of large computer applications are also not covered at this stage, including the personnel management information system and the stores and property management systems.

The schedule so far is divided into three parts dealing with Air Staff, Bases and units, and records having general distribution.

3.2   **SDFS classified file system**

The registered file system of each RNZAF agency constitutes one record series. Each series uses the standardised duplex-numeric system Defence has adopted. The first group of numbers are the same throughout the Military, and these standard "prime numbers" are listed in the imaginatively named Standard Defence File Index DM 17, which was too awkward to photocopy, but which should be available in Head Office. The Index provides for files covering every conceivable topic, and each unit merely opens a file and gives it the appropriate number from the list. Only the first group of digits is mandatory for the subject, except for the Establishment file numbers, which are controlled by Defence HQ and are the same throughout the country. In other cases the secondary numbers given are up to the individual unit, although by convention PRIME NUMBER/1 is used for the general file on any subject.

This method is supposed to produce an appropriately uniform filing system throughout Defence. This uniformity of numbers, and the massive amount of duplication up through the chain of command, means that the series in individual units are like clones of one original Defence series. If it does nothing else, it makes the production and implementation of a disposal schedule a lot easier, assuming that each Clerk has the same understanding about what is meant to be covered by a particular prime number. One problem is that the functional records of some units are apt to be buried in the Procrustean bed of the SDFS.The schedule follows the same order as the SDFS and uses a combination of classification numbers and common file headings.

Dates
The new system of classification was implemented by Defence HQ in 1983, although not in Defence HQ itself.

Physical description
Standard Government issue files in manila foolscap file folders with the usual GPO file tag.

A file list is used to control each series, and this is sometimes computerised.

Predecessor series
Prior to 1983 the units used their own subject classification systems, which I suppose should be regarded as separate series.

Notes

Each record series is comprised of a large number of file series, which are contained within a number of larger groups. These groups, and the prime numbers they occupy, are as follows:

File series.
The current SDFS comprises a large number of file series and sub-series. The main active series are:

**1000 - 1999   General administration, organisation
              and management**

This section relates to organisation, staffing procedures, manpower surveys, matters of an administrative nature such as accidents, charitable campaigns, office procedures, management advisory services projects, and any subjects not covered by the other sections.

2000 - 2099   Intelligence

These files relate to intelligence activities involving the gathering, evaluating, and disseminating of information of military value.

2100 - 2199   Security

These files are concerned with: personnel security investigations; physical security and protection of facilities and installations; control and issue of instructions concerning the safekeeping of classified information; and the system for classification, regrading, and declassification.

2200 - 2699   Reserved
Standardisation (with NATO and other allies).

2700 - 2899   Communications and electronics

Files relating to signal communication activities involving: planning, programming, evaluating, and developing strategic and non-tactical communication facilities; the use and maintenance of signal communications equipment; and the operation of the Forces Communication System.

2900 - 2999   Publications

This block relates to the preparation, co-ordination, issue, and maintenance of official publications.

3000 - 3699   Plans, operations, and readiness

Includes files relating to such matters as: strategic concepts and force objectives; elaboration of policies and plans; warfare techniques; forces readiness; operational doctrine and training; combat development studies; applied and operational research, Defence Science and Technology.

4500 - 4999   Training

Includes such subjects as: training of officers and men, and special training for civilians; training standards; individual training plans to support the introductionof new equipment, concepts, doctrine, and policy.

5000 - 5999   Personnel

Files relating to the functions of obtaining, managing, and providing personnel services for the members of the NZ Forces. They also include correspondence relating to civilian personnel administration.

6600 - 6899   Medical services

Medical policy matters; medical care and health of all NZ Forces personnel; and supervision and direction of preventive medicine.

6900 - 6999   Dental services

7000 - 7499   Finance and accounting

Budgeting, disbursing, and accounting; personnel pay administration; financial agreements; and statistical reporting.

7500 - 7999   Transportation

General traffic management; the management of administrative motor vehicles; and the movement of personnel and supplies by air, water, or rail or other land transportation.

7600 - 7999   Quartering, works, land, and buildings

These files relate to: the acquisition, disposal, utilization, and management of real property or interest therein; design and construction of works projects; the maintenance of works and buildings; utilities services; and similar subjects.

10000 - 19999 Logistics, equipment and supplies

Relates to all aspects concerning the furnishing of equipment and supplies including: the development of equipment and materiel; procurement; distribution; storage; issue and disposition; maintenance programme; and equipment inspection reports.

3.2 Publications

RNZAF produces a great many technical and non-technical publications, most of which are continually updated. Control of publications has recently started to be decentralised so that units on bases can be 'sponsors' of a particular publication. There are also local publications such as base routine orders, newsletters and so on.Lists of current Defence HQ and Auckland sponsored publications are attached as an appendix.They cover a wide range of subjects and functions, from detailed technical procedures, to curricula and standing orders.The master copies of all publications were formerly held in the RNZAF library in Defence HQ.It is not clear if all publications created on the bases are held centrally.

3.3 Unit Histories

Each unit is supposed to produce a unit history providing basic information about the unit over a

given period. The Air Force is generally much better at doing this than the Army and we have been receiving regular transfers of this material. The publication giving instructions on compilation of the histories is attached as an appendix.

3.4 **Photographs, Film and Video**

A contentious issue.The Air Force produces thousands of photographs in the course of its work, as part of its operational requirements, housekeeping requirements and public relations requirements. At present the photographs and negatives are handed over to the Museum after a certain period, although the RNZAF maintains that they are still in 'current administrative use'. Similarly, film and video produced by various sections of the organisation have in the past found their way to the Museum or even outside institutions.

4. **GENERAL APPRAISAL CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 As with the Army schedule, there was an easily attained consensus on what ought to be kept (see below). The difficulty came with trying to determine WHERE it ought to be kept, given the duplication of material at each level. Generally records were kept at the highest possible level, unless substantive unique information would be lost by this process. Air Staff files proved to be exceptionally detailed so any such loss would be minimal.

4.2 The maintenance of Unit Histories ensures that basic historical information about who did what to whom, how and where, is maintained. Although a form of secondary source, I think that these legitimately allow the destruction of some routine material that might otherwise need to be kept.

4.3 Similarly, the whole range of publications document the life and work of the RNZAF in great detail, providing a wealth of information on equipment, training, procedures, important and unimportant events, postings etc.

4.4 For information on staff, the PIMS computerised personnel management information system documents every event in the life of a service member, and most of this ends up on the personal file and is retained eventually by National Archives. This information would include postings, training course results, medical information and so on. The existence of this information frees us from having

to collect such information through the registered files, although I have scheduled similar material for retention on file simply because the likely user would need access other than on a personal file basis (for example, end-of-course results).

4.5 General administrative registered file series such as the SDFS are difficult to schedule. However, the administrative arrangements devised to implement the schedule should ensure that sufficient flexibility is present, and that the schedule can be 'fine-tuned' as we go and as the records systems develop. Files ready for disposal will first be inspected by specialist officers involved in the area to which the file relates. The list will then be reviewed by the Air Force, including Museum Staff and the RNZAF Historian to see if the schedule has been correctly applied and look at 'interesting' files if necessary. The list will then go to Defence and the Defence Historian, before being handed to National Archives. At that stage we will be able to see what files scheduled for destruction have caught the eye of Defence and the RNZAF and we will have the option of asking them to be transferred if necessary. All files going to the Museum will be listed and marked accordingly.

4.6 It is planned that the schedule will eventually be expanded to cover ALL records created within the RNZAF, including the remaining units and the various computer applications. The Air Command records will be appraised next year, so that the middle tier of records will be covered.

4.7 Classified files are not covered by the schedule; these should be appraised separately. Often the classified version of a file will contain the 'best' information.

5. INFORMATION RECOMMENDED FOR TRANSFER

5.1 I hope that the attached draft schedules are clear enough. The file series listed follow the order of the SDFS, and wherever possible the SDFS numbers are included. Individual file titles are included where there might be ambiguity.

5.2 Basically the records scheduled for transfer provide evidence of and information on what the RNZAF does and where and how it does it. It was agreed that operational records had a priority over non-operational ones and that things unique to the service were of prime importance. For example,

Training files on flying training were given a greater weight than Training files on cooking or driving; information on aircraft was more important than information on trucks and so on.

5.3   How the Air Force operates and is managed: policy on all areas; significant evidence of the organisation, functions, and transactions of the agencies in the RNZAF and the organisation as a whole. This includes nearly all Air Staff files (only a very small proportion of Air Staff records are recommended for destruction.) Especially significant are 'business planning' files, files on standing orders and regulations, management reviews, minutes and other papers of RNZAF committees and boards, the application of legislation, ministerial and Parliamentary inquiries, Force development, establishments, the Air Force Canteen. That is, basically all the policy files at Air Staff level dealing with 'management', planning, personnel, equipment, operations, training, reporting etc.

5.4   What the Air Force does, i.e. its primary functions. This information is contained mostly in the Operations series at each level and includes records on actual operations both at home and overseas. Nearly all files on operations such as search and rescue activities, maritime operations and UN tasks are recommended for retention. Exercises can also be included here (at Air Staff level, anyway); although a form of training, they are often an end in themselves, involving as they do complex operations involving the armed services of other countries. Significant reports or information from the regular overseas flights to Europe and the US are also included, and 'taxi' work ferrying VIPs, as well as cooperation with and assistance for other organisations. The provision of service personnel for honour guards etc is also a significant peace time function, although not one that needs documenting in detail.

5.5   Training and education. Training: the emphasis is on operational training such as flying and navigation (and survival training) and pilot and command courses, rather than trade training - files recommended for retention cover what they were taught (curricula), and how individuals and classes fared. The introductory training for all personnel is also included. The non-SDFS training files are included in this, as well as any RNZAF-produced training videos. The unit histories will also carry this information. SDFS training files were mostly

kept at Group (Command) and Air Staff levels rather than at Base or the schools themselves.

5.6 Land and works. Air bases were significant structures of historical importance; their acquisition and development should be adequately documented. Recommended for retention are series containing significant information about airbases as significant local community features: the acquisition and disposal of land and buildings, the construction and alteration of buildings. Most of these files should be kept at Group and above, although any files dealing with land acquisition or disposal should be kept whatever the level. Records include SDFS files from the appropriate series, Works plans, and photographs.

5.7 The Air Force as a 'culture'. Series dealing with military discipline, treatment of civilian personal, complaints and grievances, public relations of all sorts; information about airbases as significant local community features, and interaction with the local community.

5.8 Major items of equipment. That is, aircraft and associated weaponry. Information on the acquisition and disposal of aircraft and weapons, as well as significant information on maintenance. This can be found in the relevant SDFS files as well as numerous technical publications.

5.9 Significant (and 'insignificant') events in the history of the service, and significant events in the community. Information about historical and current happenings in the RNZAF that document important occurrences to the agency: events, tasks under taken, changes, eg courts of inquiry, court martials, operations, major visits. This can be found in unit histories, routine orders, newsletters, after operation reports, files on inquiries and courts martial. The same records will document events of significance outside the service, such as disasters, search and rescue operations, overseas operations and so on.

5.10 Basic and readily accessible information about personnel. Most of this is provided by the personal record system, but information on unit personnel, training course personnel, course results for significant courses, discipline matters and significant personnel matter can be picked up through SDFS files or training school informal files, or the unit histories and Base Routine orders.

6   INFORMATION RECOMMENDED FOR DESTRUCTION

6.1   In general, files were recommended for destruction
       if they failed to meet any of the criteria listed
       above, or if, in meeting those criteria, they were
       duplicated elsewhere in the organisation, or their
       information should more usefully be kept at another
       level. This duplication would be by far the most
       common reason for recommending material for
       destruction. We tried to keep material at the
       highest possible level, so that, for example, most
       unit files are scheduled for destruction.

6.2   Files failing to meet the criteria for transfer were
       generally on routine house-keeping administrative
       functions of no evidential value, or redeeming
       significant informational value.

6.3   Apart from duplicated material, files recommended
       for destruction in the RNZAF Disposal Schedule dealt
       normally with one of the following subjects:

       a)   Stores - the acquisition and disposal of
             equipment and supplies apart from aircraft and
             weaponry.

       b)   Transportation - the movement of men and
             materiel. This seems to take up an inordinate
             number of files.

       c)   Personnel administration - travel arrangements,
             pay and allowances, accommodation, enlistment,
             re-enlistment, releases. All significant
             information is picked up on the personal file.

       d)   Training - in-service courses and trades
             training apart from those mentioned above;
             exercise files not containing any report.

       e)   Sport and competition.- Results of the endless
             rounds of sports and competitions are found in
             unit histories and routine orders as well as
             base newsletters.

       f)   Deployment of men and women to units and areas.

       g)   Messes, private funds, canteens, officers
             clubs, associations, societies. Only policy
             files need be kept on these matters, apart from
             significant files on private funds.

6.4   Some of the subjects were of course more interesting
       at some levels than others. The files of the
       individual units are usually the most mundane of

"working files"; if they contain anything of importance to the unit itself or to the Air Force, then that information will be picked up at Group (Command)or Air Staff. "Policy" files take the form of circularised instructions from above, or the files containing Routine Orders and the like. Any report or initiative undertaken by the unit will appear in Air Staff files, along with possible comments and resultant instructions. Buildings and other capital works will be authorised from Wellington and channeled through Group HQ. This highly centralised administrative structure means that very little at the unit level is unique.

7. RESEARCH VALUE OF RECORDS RECOMMENDED FOR TRANSFER

7.1. It is hoped that the files left for transfer will have a high likelihood of containing information providing a general picture of the Air Force at all levels, and cater for the special interests of particular groups: veterans, unit historians, regional historians, genealogists and so on.

7.2 The files should be of research value to those writing histories of the Air Force, the regional commands, and individual operational units and corps; as well as those interested in the general history of the military in NZ or particular aspects of it; social historians; and those working on regional and local histories of areas in which the military have played a major role. They should also provide historical information to groups and societies who have dealings with the Air Force (eg. schools, local authorities), as well as provide information of interest to the significant proportion of the population which has served in the Air Force, both individual ex-servicemen as well as unit associations etc. The records should also be of use to the Air Force itself, by documenting organisational change, supplementing unit histories, providing locally available details on land and installations.

8. RESTRICTIONS

[have been removed]

9. RECOMMENDATION

That the attached schedule be approved.

[name removed]
Regional Archivist, Christchurch