

Aircraft Observation Post (Cowcowing)

Using the Cowcowing Observation Post the Jones sisters “Alma and Mona” spent many a day and night during WW2, searching the skies for enemy aircraft which were to be reported to the police who would notify our army – this concrete plinth shows the markings of a compass so that they could report aircraft routes with some accuracy (We think it was made by Athol Wallace Jones).

Volunteers training required skills in aircraft identification, radio use, morse code, map reading and weather reporting. All this had to be achieved rapidly by the women who in most cases have never seen a real aircraft before, at least not close up.



The role of the “Australian Volunteer Air Observers Corps” was carried out under a section of our “Land Army” and at its peak in 1944 it had approximately 24,000 personnel and 2,656 Observation Posts. (VOAC was formed in 1941 and modelled on the successful “Royal Observer Corps” in Britain).

The teams were mainly made up of women (civilian volunteers) who toiled to keep the economy going while the men were overseas; a Japanese invasion during this time was expected. As this threat declined the VAOC's role was expanded to include coast watching, assisting air traffic control, weather reporting and fire spotting. The VOAK was disbanded on 10 April 1946.

Staffing of these posts received only phone, clock, binoculars, aircraft identification silhouette cards, log book, a table and two chairs the RAAF did not supply comforts, nor payments for transport or any food allowances. An arm band and later a small blue lapel pin were the only form of identification for the volunteers in the first year and was followed by volunteers eventually receiving a uniform of a beige coveralls and beret for the women and an unglamorous boilersuit for the few men.

The responsibility for keeping records of volunteer service rested with the VAOC and not the RAAF, as a result the records were patchy. This oversight had ramifications after the war for volunteers seeking recognition of their efforts.



ENEMY AIRCRAFT

IN USE IN EUROPEAN WAR ZONE

				
FOCKE-WULF 190	HENKEL III, K.	JUNKERS Ju 88.	JUNKERS Ju 288	JUNKERS Ju 253
				
GOTHA Go 242.	FOCKE-WULF 189	HENSCHEL Hs 126.	JUNKERS Ju 87	MESSERSCHMITT Me 109a
				
MESSERSCHMITT Me 109b	MESSERSCHMITT 210	DORNIER Do 217	FOCKE-WULF 187	HENKEL He 177
				
DORNIER Do 17, Z.	HENSCHEL Hs 129.	MESSERSCHMITT Me 110	BLOHM & VOESS 142	FOCKE-WULF 200 K
				
JUNKERS Ju 50.	BLOHM & VOESS 222.	DORNIER Do 18	DORNIER Do 24	DORNIER Do 26
				
HENKEL He 115.	DFS 230.	MESSERSCHMITT 323.	JUNKERS Ju 52.	HENKEL He 118.
				
MACCHI C.200.	MACCHI C.202.	SAVOIA-MARCHETTI SM.79.	REGGIANE RE 2001.	FIAT G.50
				
CANT Z.1002	BREDA B8.	REGGIANE R.E. 2000.	SAVOIA-MARCHETTI SM.82	CANT Z.506 B