

ADDRESS BY
HER HONOUR THE HONOURABLE SALLY THOMAS AM
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
*Parade for Number 114 Mobile Control Reporting Unit –
Royal Australian Air Force*
RAAF Base, Darwin
Thursday, 23 May 2013

Ladies and gentlemen. It is 70 years ago today that Number 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit was formed in Camden, New South Wales on 23 May 1943.

We have assembled today to recognise the dedication and sacrifice of the airmen and women who have served at 114-MCRU (*pronounced one-one-four M-ker-roo*) over the past seven decades including those on parade today.

Since its formation the unit has served with distinction on operations around the world. These operations include in the Pacific in World War II, in Malaysia in the 1950s and 60s and, more recently, in Afghanistan.

The unit has an interesting operational history, deploying under the command of Wing Commander Gordon Steege to Papua New Guinea on 27 June 1943 – just five weeks after its formation.

During World War II, 114-MCRU operated at various areas in the Pacific to provide early warning and fighter control. Of note, the unit was involved in Operation TARAKAN (*pronounced tar-ra-can*) in Borneo in April 1945, which saw ferocious fighting with Japanese forces. During this war the unit was successful in supporting Australian fighters against enemy aircraft.

The Queen's Colour with Battle Honours being paraded today is in recognition of the unit's outstanding service during World War II.

In August 1958, the unit was again deployed on operations overseas. The mission was to RAAF Base Butterworth, Malaysia. 114MCRU provided surveillance and air battle management during the Malayan Emergency from 1958 to 1960. 114MCRU remained at Butterworth and conducted operations during the Indonesia Confrontation from 1963 to 1966.

More recently, 114MCRU deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan. From May 2007 to August 2009 the Unit supported the United Nations mission to stabilise and reconstruct Afghanistan.

During this deployment over 400 Air Force personnel deployed to the unit and played a vital role in providing air battle management of the Afghanistan airspace operating continuously for two years. This was a momentous achievement indeed.

I am told that often service has been in the most arduous and dangerous of conditions and with personnel coming under enemy attack. The unit is justifiably proud of its Queen's Colour and what it represents—agility, teamwork and operational excellence.

To the airmen and women of 114MCRU on parade today, I commend you this morning for your exceptionally high standards. Your professionalism is a reflection of the dedication and service of those who have gone before and yourselves as proud members of the unit and the Royal Australian Air Force.

To you all on this most important occasion—the 70th anniversary of the formation of the unit—I offer my warmest congratulations.

Thank you for your service and very well done.